658b-9 Montague Street

Design, Access and Heritage Statement P02

11th August 2023

## Introduction

This design and access statement incorporating heritage statement has been prepared by Dannatt, Johnson Architects on behalf of the British Museum to support an application for Listed Building consent for 9 Montague Street bow window reinforcement and repair works.

The British Museum is seeking to undertake these works to improve fabric appearance and performance as part of a site-wide strategy to minimise deterioration and water ingress. The works proposed involve reconstruction of a bow window to the rear of 9 Montague Street including new steel structure, to replace the failing timber structure.

The application will be submitted by the Planning Lab, with Dannatt Johnson Architects acting as the British Museum’s agents for architecture and historic building conservation. Proposals have been prepared by Alan Baxter Associates structural engineers.

9 Montague Street does not appear in the 2008 or 2019 Conservation Management Plans, nor is it included within the scope of the Significance Plans.

## Background and Listing Information

9 Montague Street is one of eleven terraced houses, listed as a single Grade II entry in May 1974, located within Camden (London District). Historic England outlines the listing as below:

List Entry Number: 1322130

List Entry Name: NUMBERS 1-11 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS INCLUDING WHITE HALL HOTEL (NUMBERS 2-5) AND MONTAGUE HOUSE (NUMBERS 8-11)

Terrace of 11 houses. c1803-06 by James Burton. Built by WE Allen. Yellow stock brick with stucco ground floors, mostly rusticated. No.11 with slate mansard roof and dormers. 4 storeys and basements, No.11 with attic. 3 windows each except Nos 1 and 2 with 4 windows each. Nos 1 and 2 form a symmetrical pair with projecting end window bays. No.11 slightly recessed. Round-arched doorways with reeded doorframes or sidelights, mostly 2-leaf doors; Nos 8-10 with attached fluted Greek Doric columns carrying cornice-heads. Nos 6 & 7 with radial patterned fanlights. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sash windows, most with original glazing bars. 1st floor with cast-iron balconies. Nos 1 & 2, stucco cornice at 3rd floor level; the remainder with 3rd floor sill band. Parapets.

INTERIORS: not inspected.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with urn finials to areas, No.1 flanked by cast-iron lamp-holders.

## Existing Condition of Buildings

Alan Baxter first visited 9 Montague Street in November 2022, at the request of CBRE, following the local collapse of the spandrel panel at ground floor level to the rear bow window. Brickwork debris was still present at ground floor level and in the lightwell below.

They visited again in January 2023, when the brickwork debris had been cleared and it was possible to look at the structure at ground floor level. They were able to see that the spandrel panel was built up off three timbers, but only one of these was built into the brickwork reveals either side. The front two, including the curved piece of timber were not therefore supported on the wall and they couldn’t see any signs that they were effectively connected to the timber behind. Both had rotated and dropped resulting in the partial collapse (see attached sketch SK01 and photos). They concluded that the spandrel panel must originally have taken some support from the window frame below, but this had been replaced, possibly during the last refurbishment and a gap was left between the underside of the front two timbers and the top of the window frame, which was filled with foam. This left the timbers unsupported and for a while the arrangement stayed in place relying on some secondary arching action in the brickwork spandrel, but the timbers will have gradually rotated under the load before finally the spandrel panel failed.

They therefore concluded that the original detail was not adequate structurally and that it would not be appropriate to simply reconstruct the bow window on a like for like basis. This could not be justified as the issues with the original detail were a major contributory factor in the collapse.

A copy of the photographic survey, as well as a covering structural statement regarding recommendations and associated considerations and justification is appended to this application.

## Proposed Works – Scope

The following proposed scope of works is based on essential works required to stabilise the property and prevent future collapse, whilst restoring the bow window, maintaining its historic character. Key improvements to the listed building fabric include:

* Install new support steels and bed on new padstone
* Reinstate brick bay (using as much existing brickwork as possible)
* Lime render the exterior
* Apply masonry paint

## Proposed Works – Use

There is no proposed change of use.

## Proposed Works – Amount

No additional floor area is created by the proposals.

## Proposed Works – Layout

There is no proposed change of layout, though new reinforcing steel structure will be introduced into the fabric.

## Proposed Works – Scale

The existing brick bow is to be carefully rebuilt, using salvaged bricks wherever possible. New steels are to be introduced, within the existing build-up thicknesses and concealed. The window will be restored. Finishes will be renewed locally, to match in with the existing. Apart from the reinforcement works, which will not be visible externally or from any occupied internal space, it is anticipated that all works will be like-for-like and therefore of a negligible scale.

## Proposed Works – Landscaping

No changes are proposed to the existing landscape.

## Proposed Works - Appearance

Works to the external façade and envelope are as listed above. These are to be like-for-like finishes, repairs will be undertaken where found to be necessary to the windows, which are the most visible elements from street level. The new steel elements will be concealed behind replacement like-for-like finishes (internally and externally) and will not affect build-up thicknesses. These, plus the reinforcement works to restore the structure, will have a positive impact on the external appearance, whilst maintaining its historic finishes and detailing.

## Proposed Works – Access

There is no proposed change to level or means of access.

## Historic Statement and Significance

9 Montague Street does not appear within the British Museum’s Conservation Management Plan, nor any Significance Plans, as it is a perimeter property.

The work proposed is essential to protecting and restoring the historic fabric itself, as well as its contents and occupants. Although the work is proposed to the external envelope of the grade II listed building, the proposed reinforcement work will be concealed and will not pose any alteration to the existing form. The works will not impact any significant fabric, nor alter the special architectural interest or historic character of the listed building. Otherwise, proposals are like-for-like renewal, with a beneficial impact on the property’s presentation and preservation.

## Conservation Approach

All work commissioned by the Museum is subject to a process of consultation with the Local Authority and Historic England, via discussion at regular dedicated quarterly meetings, followed up by detailed email correspondence. Once the proposals have been discussed in detail, they are then either covered by a detailed exchange of letters, or a formal listed building application is made.

The proposed works in this application are necessary to improve the stability, appearance and durability of 9 Montague Street in its continued use. Although works of this type are utilitarian by nature, these proposals have been developed with respect to both the Grade II designation of the building, with a focus on longevity and security of the repair intervention.

The proposal itself, to use steels, was reached to after several options were interrogated by ABA. Upon opening up to inspect the failed construction, they concluded that the original detail was not adequate structurally and that it would not be appropriate to simply reconstruct the bow window on a like for like basis. This could not be justified as the issues with the original detail were a major contributory factor in the collapse.

Options to reinforce in timber and reconstruct the floor locally to support the ground floor and the curved brickwork to the spandrel panel (brickwork cannot arch when it is built on a curve) were also examined but these could not be justified either. They reviewed the repair proposals with senior ABA Engineers to see whether they thought that a repair could be achieved using a similar timber arrangement to the original, but it was concluded that this had been such a major factor in the partial collapse of the brickwork that it could not be justified. It seems unlikely that the original builder fully understood the difficulties and rotational forces that arise when building a curved brickwork flat arch.
They concluded that the arch itself and the brick spandrel panel over needed to be supported on a stainless steel angle, built into the reveals either side, with intermediate support provided by the floor structure. The existing arrangement of the floor timbers was such that in order to take support from the existing timbers and provide support to the angles to the arch a cranked member was needed and we concluded that this needed to be steel. On this basis we developed the proposal as submitted with this application. The complete discussion of the options and the proposal can be found in ‘2023-07-03 Struct Eng Notes on Reconstruction Proposals’ attached to this application.

We have made an evaluation of the impact of the proposals in this application as interventions to the function, form and fabric of the Museum. The grades used to define the level of impact are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *1* | ***Positive*** *Overall neutral/minor impact* |
| *2* | ***Moderate*** *impact* |
| *3* | ***Major*** *impact* |
| *4* | *Impact to be determined* |

**6.0 SUMMARY LEVEL OF HERITAGE IMPACT**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Overall Impact*** | *Form* | *Function* | *Fabric* |
| *New concealed steel structure to support bow window, in place of historic timber construction.* | ***1*** | *1* | *1* | *2* |
| *Repairs and reconstruction of brick bay, and bow window* | ***1*** | *1* | *1* | *1* |

## Heritage Impact Statement

In conclusion, we believe that the proposed interventions described in this application will have a neutral impact and overall will result in the lowest end of the scale of '*less than substantial harm*', when measured against NPFF clause 202. These proposed works will improve structural stability in 9 Montague Street and restore a key, historic feature of the facade.

The proposed works to the bow window have been considered on a carefully, and consultants have sought to develop the most effective way to provide the structural improvements required balanced with least impact specific to the fabric of the asset, with no alteration to the visual appearance.

Overall, we believe the works are essential for protection of the building and will have a neutral impact on the overall significance of 9 Montague Street or, indeed, the museum.

**Photographs**

Please refer to 2023-01-31 Photosheet

**Drawings**

638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-10001-Proposed Plans (1)
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-10002-Proposed Plans (2)
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-11001-Existing Plans (1)
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-11002-Existing Plans (2)
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-20000-Proposed Elevation

638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-21000-Existing Elevation
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-30000-Proposed Section
638b-BM-DJA-DR-A-31000-Existing Section
658b-BM-DJA-DR-A-01000-9 Montague Street Site Location Plan
658b-BM-DJA-DR-A-11000-9 Montague Street Block Plan
2023-02-17 Revised Existing Structure
2023-03-31 Rev A proposed detail