

## Heritage Statement

Euston fire station, 172 Euston Road, London NW1 2DH  
Reconfiguration of firefighter accommodation on ground, first & second floors



Photograph 1: south-east elevation viewed from street [03.04.2023]

### Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of London Fire Brigade's application for Listed Building Consent for the above proposal.

### Listed status of building

Euston fire station was first listed as grade II\* on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1974, under List Entry Number 1342074. The listing description is as follows:

Fire station with flats above. 1901-2, altered and extended c1920; later C20 alterations. Designed by HFT Cooper of the Fire Brigade Branch of the London County Council Architects' Department. Built by Stimpson & Co.

**MATERIALS:** Red brick laid in English bond with Portland stone dressings, basement in yellow stock brick; Portland stone ashlar facing at ground and third floors; Slate roofs.

**PLAN:** L-shaped block with main frontage facing SE to Euston Road behind forecourt. It comprised ground-floor fire station with flats above and a central well stair. A private entrance and stair on SW corner led to the Third Officer's flat on fourth floor. A passage from Euston Square led to a yard and stables in NE corner (demolished). Plan altered c1920 when passage infilled and single-storey extension added to appliance room on SE side. Original appliance bays now converted as reception area, watch room and offices; the extension is now the appliance room.

**EXTERIOR:** Principally five storeys rising to six, plus attics. Lively Arts and Crafts domestic style with asymmetrical façades, irregular height and massing, projecting square and canted bays, and oriels. Picturesque roofline with deep eaves broken by projecting gabled bays, dormers and tall stacks. Varied fenestration, combining mullioned-and-transomed and narrower two-light vertical windows, and some oculi. Metal casements with leaded lights. Pitched roofs; that to main SE block steeply so. Main (SE)

elevation: Ground floor (from E to W) has 2 appliance bays with patterned frieze with 'L.C.C FIRE BRIGADE STATION EUSTON 1902' in bronze lettering, and a round-arched window with keystone. First and second floors each have four flush-framed mullion-and-transom windows; third floor, faced in stone, has narrower windows set in splayed reveals. Fourth floor has three canted stone oriels of three lights with quoined surrounds, that to left rising to a fifth floor with gable above. The elevation terminates in a canted staircase bay of two lights rising to the third floor; top section is more steeply canted with three lights and stone mullions under a circular roof; above this is a gable with oculus and two small rectangular lights below. In the angle of the canted bay and flank of return elevation is a single-storey porch with segmental-arched doorway and slate roofed.

SW elevation to Euston Square is dominated by projecting rectangular right-hand (S) bay and canted penultimate left-hand (N) bay; the former gabled and the latter hipped with glazed clerestory. Two large mullion-and-transom bay windows at ground-floor level, between which was entrance to the yard, now infilled. Asymmetrically-placed canted oriel rising through third and fourth floors with diagonal balcony linked to N projecting bay.

C1920 single-storey extension to E, now the appliance room, is not of special interest. Modern drill tower to the rear is not of special interest.

INTERIOR: Extensively refurbished in the 1990s. Some original features including doors, dado panelling in ground-floor former recreation room, and fireplaces survive, but generally much altered. Stone stair with plain iron balustrade.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: Walls, gatepiers and railings to forecourt on SE side and basement area on SW side. Low brick wall with stone copings and stone piers with gambrel-shaped heads. Gatepiers to angle of forecourt have inset geometric panels to head; those to basement entrance torpedo-shaped heads. Wrought-iron railings with flattened sections in portcullis design.

HISTORY: Fire services in London emerged principally from the need for insurance providers to limit their losses through damage to property in the period after the Great Fire of 1666. Initially, each insurer maintained a separate brigade that only served subscribers until the foundation of an integrated service in 1833, funded by City businesses. In 1866, following an Act of Parliament of the previous year, the first publicly-funded authority charged with saving lives and protecting buildings from fire was founded: the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, initially part of the Metropolitan Board of Works. The earliest MFB fire stations were generally plain brick and few pre-1880 examples survive. In 1880s under the MFB architect Robert Pearsall, fire stations acquired a true architectural identity, most notably in the rich Gothic style typical of Victorian municipal buildings such as Bishopsgate. It was the building boom of the 1890s-1900s however that was to transform fire station architecture and give the Brigade some of its most characterful buildings. In 1889, the fire brigade passed to the newly-formed London County Council, and from 1896 new stations were designed by a group of architects lead by Owen Fleming and Charles Canning Winmill, both formerly of the LCC Housing Department, who brought the highly-experimental methods which had evolved for designing new social housing to the Fire Brigade Division (as the department was called from 1899), and drew on a huge variety of influences to create unique and commanding stations, each built to a bespoke design. This exciting period in fire station design continued to the outbreak of World War I.

The new station replaced the Metropolitan Board of Works station at 133-135 Great Portland Street. It opened on 27 November 1902. Euston was the headquarters of the North Division of the London Fire Brigade, under the command of a Third Officer. Domestic accommodation was provided for divisional staff on the first floor and for the Third Officer on the fourth floor.

Within the listing, the "Reason for designation" is as follows:

Euston Fire Station is designated at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons:

\* It is widely regarded as the masterpiece of a remarkable group of fire stations built by the LCC between 1896-1914, and stands at the summit of achievement of LCC civic architecture of this rich and prolific period;

- \* A highly original interpretation of the Arts and Crafts style, expressed through its dynamic façades and bold, skilful massing, coupled with high-quality materials and detailing; its romantic silhouette is a prominent landmark;
- \* Well preserved externally, with original boundary walls and ironwork.

The building remains in use as a fully operational fire station and the proposed works, which are the subject of this application, are to support the continuation of this existing use.

### **Proposed works**

London Fire Brigade is proposing to form single occupancy resting and changing rooms on the first and second floors of Euston fire station for use by individual firefighters, together with reconfigured shower and toilet facilities on the first and second floors, as indicated on the “existing” and “proposed” floorplans that accompany this application.

On the ground floor, internal alterations are proposed to form single use toilets and a shower room, including reconfiguration of the non-compliant accessible toilet facility, together with relocation of the existing doorway to the equipment cleaning room to give direct access from the appliance bay.

The proposed works, which entail limited alteration of existing fabric, will directly contribute to LFB’s ongoing project to provide single use resting and changing rooms for operational firefighters, to address increasing levels of diversity and enhanced aspirations for individual privacy.

The new partitions to form the resting and changing rooms would be painted finish plasterboard over stud wall construction. Doors, skirting boards, architraves, and other details would be to match existing. There would be minimal associated removal or alteration of original walls, floors, ceilings, as necessary to achieve the required room configurations. There are no changes proposed to the windows or other elements of the external elevations.

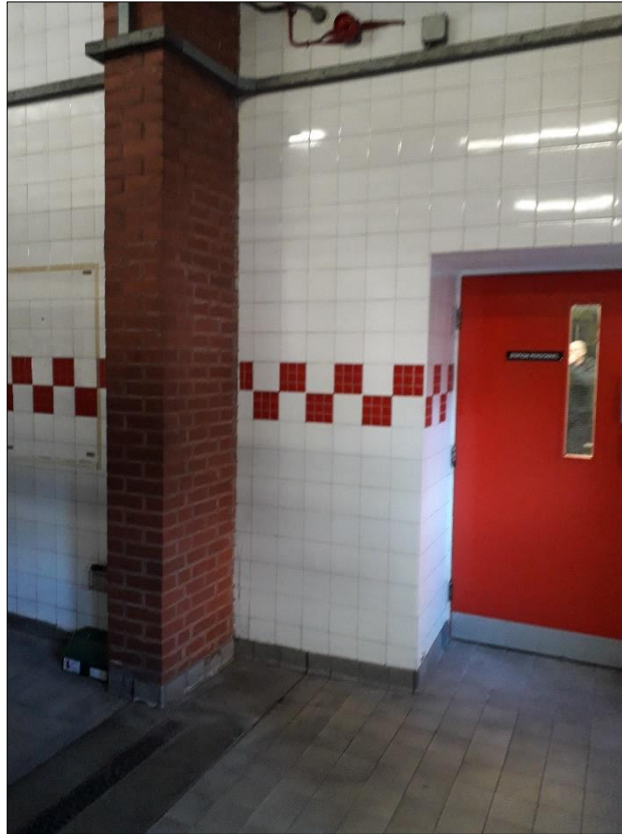
The photographs below are representative images of the existing fabric of the building.



Photograph 2: room G10 showing existing doorway to BA room, on right hand side [03.04.2023]



Photograph 3: room G10, showing proposed location of new doorway to right of existing doorway [03.04.2023]



Photograph 4: appliance bay, showing proposed location of new doorway to BA room [03.04.2023]



Photograph 5: room 01-109a, communal dorm with drop down beds and integrated storage [03.04.2023]





Photograph 6: room 01-109, communal dorm with drop down beds and integrated storage [03.04.2023]



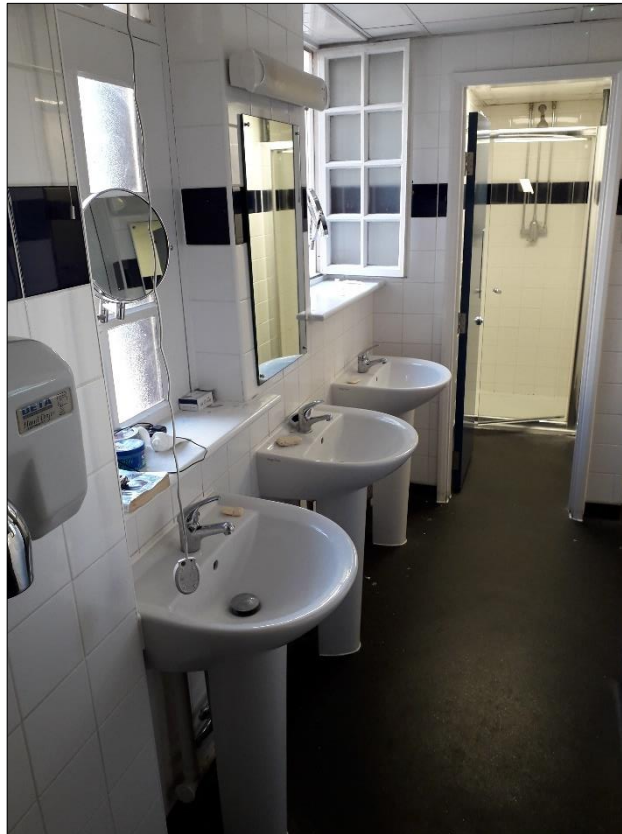
Photograph 7: room 02-208a, communal locker room and changing area [03.04.2023]



Photograph 8: indicative detail of second floor ceiling void showing plaster finish to soffit [03.04.2023]



Photograph 9: room 02-207, communal facilities to be reconfigured as wc/shower rooms [03.04.2023]



Photograph 10: room 02-207, communal facilities to be reconfigured as wc/shower rooms [03.04.2023]



Photograph 11: room 02-207, communal facilities to be reconfigured as wc/shower rooms [03.04.2023]



## Heritage context

The need for historic buildings to accommodate some degree of change was acknowledged by Martin Cherry (English Heritage, Head of Listings, at time of writing), in "Listing twentieth-century buildings: the present situation", (p.5), Ch 2 of "Modern Matters, Principles & Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture". Susan Macdonald (Ed), English Heritage & Donhead Publications, 1996:

Listing is not designed to fossilize buildings for all time whatever the cost. It provides the opportunity to explore all possible means of maintaining an historic building in viable use without compromising its historical and architectural character. With care, resources and imagination this can normally be achieved, although some change is likely if a building is to continue serving the needs of its occupants.

Reference has also been made to "London's historic fire stations, EH and LFB Joint Guidance, March 2010" in which it is pointed out that:

The history of the [fire] service and its buildings has been a story of constant change as the complexities of the city have evolved. New equipment, new ways of working and new responsibilities mean that fire stations are subject to constant pressure for adaptation. Often built to meet the particular requirements of their time, adaptation of fire stations presents challenges, but if they are to continue to be in effective use there has to be recognition that change is necessary.

The Joint Guidance goes on to say, in "5.1 Plan Form", that:

These spaces have often accommodated alterations historically, and future alterations should be (where possible) designed in previously compromised spaces, leaving historically intact spaces as they are.

It is apparent that the relevant areas of the ground, first and second floors, where these changes are proposed, have been "previously compromised" through the removal of previous partitions and associated alterations. Therefore, undertaking such changes here will have substantially less impact on the building's significance than might similar works elsewhere.

Archive drawings included with the application show that the floorplans of the ground, first and second floors have all been subject to incremental adaption and alteration over the years, enabling the building to maintain its intended use as a fully operational fire station.

## Conclusion

Under the listing process, change is permissible as long it is properly considered. London Fire Brigade consider that this proposal has been put together with the appropriate level of care and attention to detail, with the intention of minimising its impact on the historic fabric and architectural interest of the building.

In this context, it is submitted that the current proposal for subdivision and associated alterations at Euston fire station is not liable to have a material effect on the architectural or historic interest of the building and, moreover, will contribute to the longer-term viability of the building by enabling it to continue in beneficial use for its intended purpose.

London Fire Brigade  
169 Union Street London SE1 0LL  
22 August 2023