Eddisons

Friends House, 173-177 Euston Rd, London NW1 2BJ

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Roofing Works

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Friends House is a Grade II Listed building which stands on the south side of Euston Road, opposite Euston Station. It is home to the head offices of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. The building is 5 storeys arranged over basement, ground and 3 upper floors. There are 2 courtyards located in the interior. The elevations are constructed of steel encased in brickwork and Portland stone dressings, cornice and porticos under an inverted roof. There are a series of smaller asphalt covered flat roofs to lightwells and roof top plants rooms. Windows are a mixture of painted metal crittall and timber sashes and external doors are timber with a varnished finish. There a series of asphalt covered terraces at basement level, these are enclosed by retaining walls topped at ground floor level with low Portland stone walls and railings.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The wider roof refurbishment project includes the following works:

- Dismantling and removal of redundant HVAC equipment.
- Preparation and repair of existing asphalt covered flat roofs ready to receive a new overlay.
- Introduction of new insulation to comply with current building regulations or upgrade where insulation already exists.
- Overlaying all asphalt covered roofs with a cold applied liquid waterproofing system.
- Installation of new Ubiflex lead replacement flashings over existing asphalt flashings.
- Introduction of raised capping detail to perimeter of roof to eliminate water running down the elevations and saturating/staining stonework.
- Removal of 4no Georgian wired roof lights and infill of openings.
- Installation of new fire escape staircase.
- Installation of Sedum roof to 1no. flat roof area.
- Raising 4no. door sets and thresholds to allow for an adequate upstand/waterproofing detail.
- Raising the level of air bricks to allow for an adequate upstand/waterproofing detail.
- Replacement of existing concrete paving stones with checker plate promenade tiles within a roof top lightwell.
- Replacement of rotten timber door set and facias to plant rooms with new uPVC type.

2.2 This planning applications seeks approval for the following elements to be undertaken within the wider roofing project:

Removal of existing roof lights:

- Removal of 4no Georgian wired roof lights and infill of openings.
- Piece in 200 x 50mm treated softwood joists and fix over with 20mm marine plywood.
- Extend inverted roof system over to match the existing, increasing insulation depth to meet current building regulations.

Eddisons

Installation of demountable staircase and demountable bridge:

- Provide new access staircase to roof area with safe route to existing emergency exit.
- Include for all necessary supports to existing roof structure.
- Staircase to be of similar construction to existing demountable staircase on site.
- Provide access bridge between roof areas 1, 2 and 5 as identified on the accompanying roof plan.

Installation of sedum green roof:

- Prior to installation of the green roof system, carry out an electronic resistance test and make good any defects.
- Sedum roof to include:
  - A geotextile protective matting laid over the new roof covering. This product to be agree with the roof system manufacturer.
  - A roof drainage and water retention system/board topped with a geotextile filter layer. This to incorporate small 'cups' allowing water to overflow when each cup is full.
  - A layer of growing medium. The growing medium is laid on top of the filter layer which prevents it from being washed away and from blocking the drainage.
  - A sedum blanket (not plug plants) from a reputable supplier incorporating a wide range of different varieties.
  - Provide a slotted aluminium edge strip to the perimeter of the roof.
  - Allow for all necessary perimeter supports/trims.

3.0 Site Description & Assessment of Heritage Significance

3.1 Friends House (173-177 Euston Road), is a 5-storey building arranged over basement, ground and 3 upper floors, which stands on the south side of Euston Road opposite Euston station.

3.2 It was built around 1927 to the design of Hubert Lidbetter who won the RIBA bronze medal for "best building erected in London" as a result. It is of steel construction, clad in brown brick with Portland stone dressings. The building takes the form of a long rectangular block, divided into two sections by an internal courtyard. The Euston Road elevation is dominated by a Portland stone tetra style in anti's portico whilst the garden facing east elevation is centred on a slightly projecting style in antis portico.

3.3 In 1996 the building was listed (Grade II). The listing description states:

"Includes: No.30 Drayton House GORDON STREET. Central Offices of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, including offices, meeting halls and library; separate lettable office accommodation incorporated in Drayton House to the west of block, completing the symmetry of the main facade. Completed in 1927 to the designs of Hubert Lidbetter, ARIBA; Grace and Marsh Ltd. General Contractors. Steel construction sheathed in brick laid in English bond and Portland stone dressings; metal framed windows to rear elevation, otherwise wood sashes, all of original design. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys and attic over basement. Long rectangular block divided in 3 by 2 interior courtyards; large meeting house at the centre, square in plan; library at south-east corner of block; small meeting house, formerly double height now subdivided, to rear of centre block, windows to south. Long elevation to Euston Road dominated by tetrastyle in antis portico, itself framed by bays; this central section, which marks the extent of the large hall, in Portland stone, with recessed ranges leading to hall's foyer. Slightly recessed side ranges of 10 windows each. All openings flat arched unless otherwise stated. The penultimate ranges to either side marked by the use of Portland stone, having a semi-circular windows to ground floor, balconied window to first floor set in moulded architrave, and keyed roundel to second floor. Cornice band continuous to entire block and separating second

from attic storey. East and west elevations identical and centred about a distyle-in-antis portico, slightly projecting from side ranges of 5 windows each. To east elevation series of terraces and walls lead down to garden, which is enclosed on north and south by a low Portland stone wall with railings similar in design to those enclosing basement areas. South elevation features projecting range of 5 bays, the openings round-arched with metal framed windows; bays one and 5 are separated from the centre 3 bays by a recessed range. The latter 3 windows mark the extent of the former small meeting house. INTERIOR: main entrance to offices through east elevation, into low lobby with stairs to second floor; this overlooks the east courtyard with circular brick fountain and French doors opening from corridors to north and south. Most of the ground-floor corridors and stairs retain original fixtures and finishes; committee rooms, some of them with moveable partitions, also retain original panelling, door furniture and fittings. The library is double height, 3 x 4 bays at east corner to Endsleigh Gardens. It was sensitively refurbished in 1993, retaining much of the original woodwork, and galleries to west and north. Great Hall with flat roof coffered, carried on square piers and pilasters, with galleries on three sides. Drop acoustic ceiling from line of architrave hides original ceiling, but this is said to be survive intact above. Railings and fitted furniture to hall also intact. 3 entrances to hall foyer from Euston Road; these doors of original design. Small meeting house of 3 bays to rear, south, has been divided to provide committee rooms on ground floor. Courtyard between Drayton House and central block has been partly filled in by recent 2-storey addition providing extra toilet and other facilities for Great Hall. The addition has been sensitively designed. The interior of Drayton House not inspected. It is said to retain much of its original finishes. The building retains most of its original character, fittings and finishes. The interiors are well designed and detailed, particularly in the east block around the courtyard. Hubert Lidbetter designed many buildings for the Society of Friends; this is the most ambitious. (The Builder: 24 June 1927: 1008)."

3.4 The building also stands within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal Statement comments:

"5.10 Friends' House (grade II listed), Nos 161-167 (odd) and a late 20th century office building form the principal frontage to Euston Road to the south of the square. The main entrance to Friends' House is expressed in a neo-classical style as a three-storey Doric colonnade. With its neighbour at Nos 161-167, it is constructed in red brick with Portland stone detailing and rises a total of four storeys. However, Nos 161-167, which reads as a single block, has a larger scale than Friends' House owing to its taller storey heights and its mansard roof punctuated by small attic windows which align with the openings below. The small, formal garden to the east of Friends' House (designated as a public open space in the London Borough of Camden Local Development Plan 2010) provides an attractive, comparatively peaceful space, defined by Portland stone boundary walls and decorative entrance gates. It is the only surviving element south of Euston Road of the original Euston Square, and provides a pedestrian link through to Endsleigh Gardens. There are vistas of the grandly scaled terrace on the south side of Endsleigh Gardens which once formed the southern edge of Euston Square (located in Sub Area 2). The mature tree within the gardens is an important element in the Euston Road streetscape."

4.0 Description of Heritage Significance

4.1 Friends House was constructed in 1927. Its fabric is not therefore of particularly historic origin nor is the use of a steel frame construction an example of a rare or unusual building technique. The building was not listed on this basis. Rather it is considered that the special significance of the building derives from two main aspects:

4.1.1 Firstly; the building holds significance due to its association with the Quaker movement and its use as the annual meeting place since construction in 1927 and also the development of the use over

time as a more general meeting place and conference venue for a variety of groups and organisations. Its location adjacent to Euston Station assists in this regard with those visiting from outside of London gaining a sense of arrival upon exit from the station and viewing the building immediately to the south.

4.1.2 The design and architecture of the building also holds significance. As noted above the design was awarded the RIBA bronze medal award for the best building erected in London in 1927. The building commands a significant presence in the Euston Road street scene and so the Bloomsbury Conservation Area with the Portland stone façade dominating significant lengths of view along the south side of the road. The buildings presence is accentuated by the fact that it stands apart from its neighbours with the garden space to the east side and the gap created by Gordon Street to the west.

5.0 How Access Issues Will be Addressed

5.1 No changes are being undertaken to the access routes in or around the building. Planning records show that access for wheelchair users was improved in 2013.

6.0 Scale/Appearance and Impact of the Proposed Refurbishment

6.1 The proposal includes for removing the existing Georgina wired roof lights within two lightwells at roof level. Due to the concealed location of the roof lights there will be no change the appearance of the building. Furthermore, the roof lights are in a dilapidated condition, and in our opinion beyond repair, and are causing the internal fixtures and finishes to become water damaged and stained. Removing and infilling the roof lights will protect the interior of the building from further damage.

6.2 The proposal includes for the installation of a demountable staircase and bridge between three separate roof areas. Installation of the staircase will improve the number of escape routes from the building and roof areas increasing life safety. In addition, the bridge will provide access to the sedum roof to enable maintenance.

6.3 The existing single ply covered flat roof over the main auditorium is to be finished with a new Sedum roof. This will change the appearance of the roof; however, this type of roof has many benefits at economic, ecological and societal levels. It provides a rainwater buffer, purifies the air, reduces the ambient temperature, regulates the indoor temperature, saves energy and encourages biodiversity in cities. We therefore believe this will be a positive addition to the building and surrounding area.