3.3.5 Pre-application Meeting 4: June 2023

The fourth preapplication meeting with LB Camden and HE was held on the 19th June 2023. The agenda centred on a site walk presenting the challenges with the existing site and back of house infrastructure and support buildings on the Estate and a presentation focused on the SWEC and ISS proposed design following the submission of the ERB application in April of 2023.

With regards to the ISS, revised designs and elevational treatment following the commencement of engagement with UKPN were presented. Officers were generally supportive of the approach to the revised proposals, which looked to mitigate the visual impact of the increased building size (as a result of UKPN requirements to meet increased electrical system demand) by shifting the proposed building northwards and westwards to abut the party walls of the Hirayama studio and 1/1A Montague Street.

Officers were also supportive of the approach of rendered materiality to the proposed elevation to reflect the neighbouring context of the rendered portico which forms the southern termination of 1/1A Montague Street.

It was noted with Officers that 1-2 bays of the existing listed railings and plinths between the proposed ISS building and Montague Street would be required to be removed during construction and reinstated in order to construct the new building, and potentially 1 railing bay may be reformatted into a gate for longer term access and maintenance. Officers expressed a preference for removing and reinstating the existing railings and plinths as per the existing arrangement, which has been adopted in the proposals.

Top row left to right:

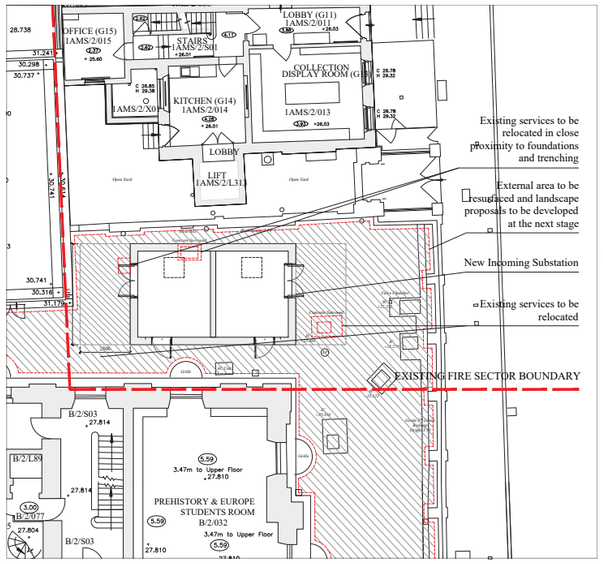
The proposed ISS plan as summarised in the planning preapplication technical pack submitted to LB Camden and HE following preapplication meeting 2 and discussed as preapplication meeting 3.

The revised ISS plan following consultation with UKPN as presented in preapplication meeting 4.

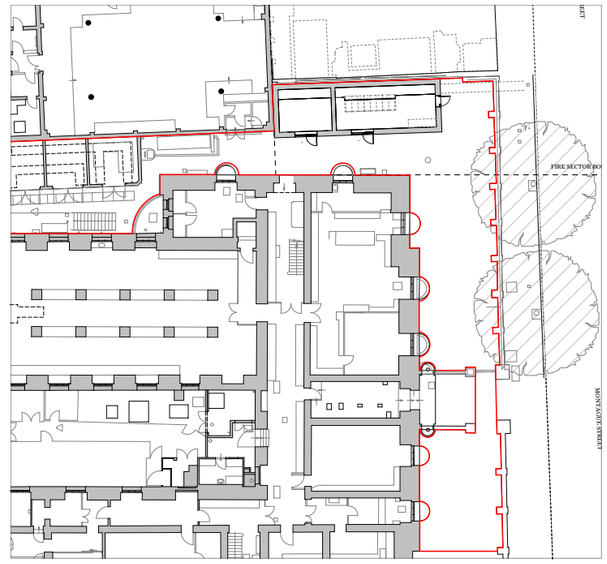
Bottom row left to right:

Proposed ISS elevation sketch as summarised in the planning preapplication technical pack submitted to LB Camden and HE following preapplication meeting 2 and discussed as preapplication meeting 3.

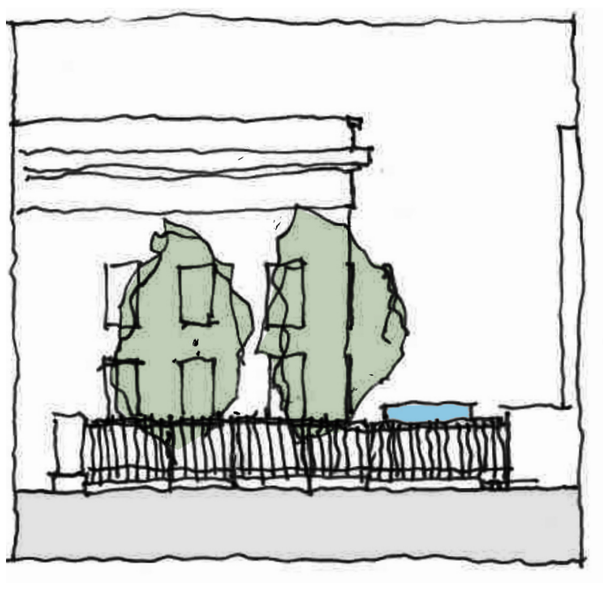
Revised ISS elevation sketch following consultation with UKPN as presented in preapplication meeting 4.



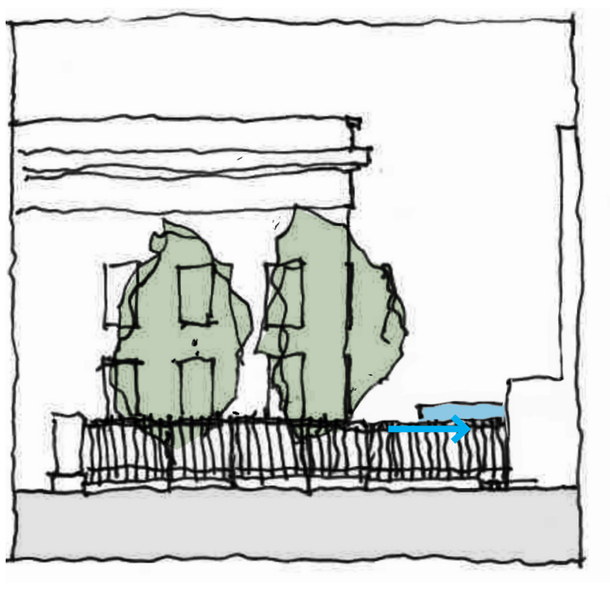
Level 02 Floor Plan: Previous



Level 02 Floor Plan: Proposed as presented at Preapplication 4



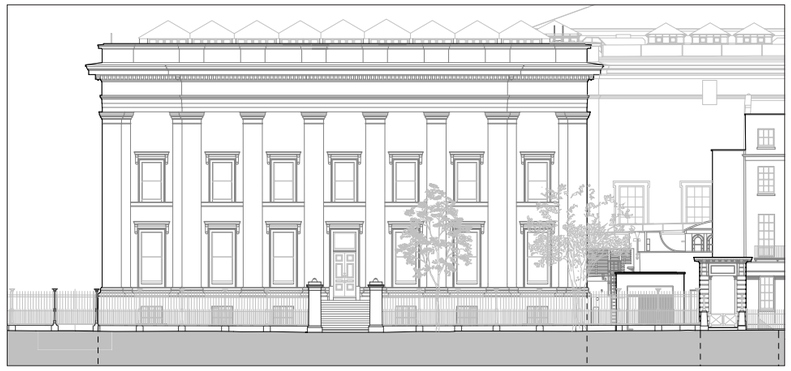
Sketch East Elevation: Previous



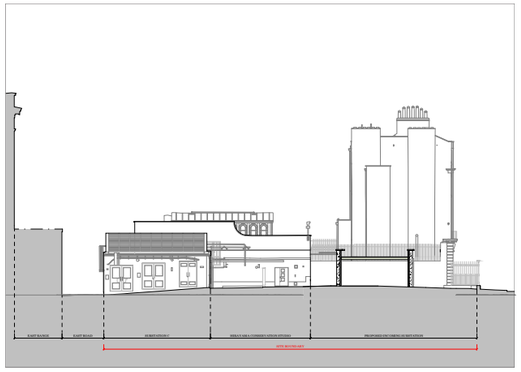
Sketch East Elevation: Proposed as presented at Preapplication 4

Officers also raised the question of landscaping proposals surrounding the ISS site and outside the White Wing following removal of the existing Portacabins, expressing a preference for large format paving landscaping to be utilised to improve the setting of the White Wing when seen from Montague Street.

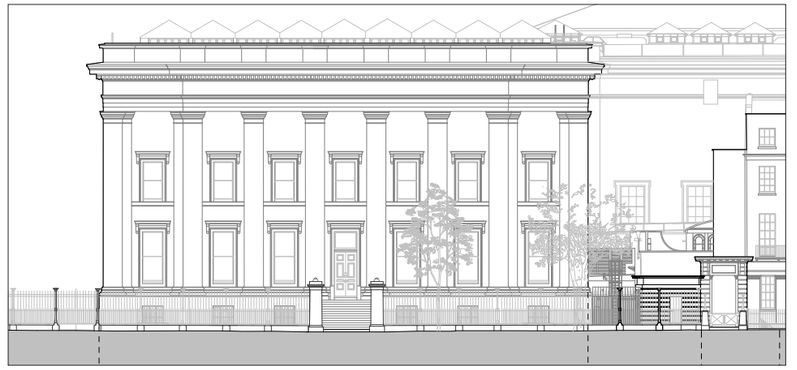
For further information regarding how the proposed design has incorporated these comments please refer to Chapter 5 of this report.



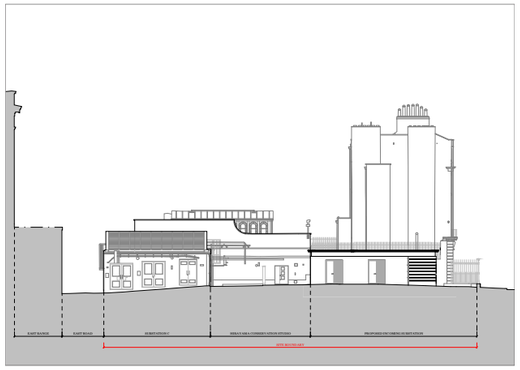
Previous proposed elevation along Montague Street



Previous proposed South Elevation



Proposed elevation along Montague Street as presented at Preapplication 4



Proposed South Elevation as presented at Preapplication 4

Existing CGI along Montague Street as presented at Preapplication 4

Proposed CGI along Montague Street as presented at Preapplication 4

Top row left to right:

The ISS Elevation design as summarised in the planning preapplication technical pack submitted to LB Camden and HE following preapplication meeting 2 and discussed as preapplication meeting 3.

Middle row left to right:

The revised ISS Elevation design following consultation with UKPN as presented in preapplication meeting 4.

Bottom row left to right:

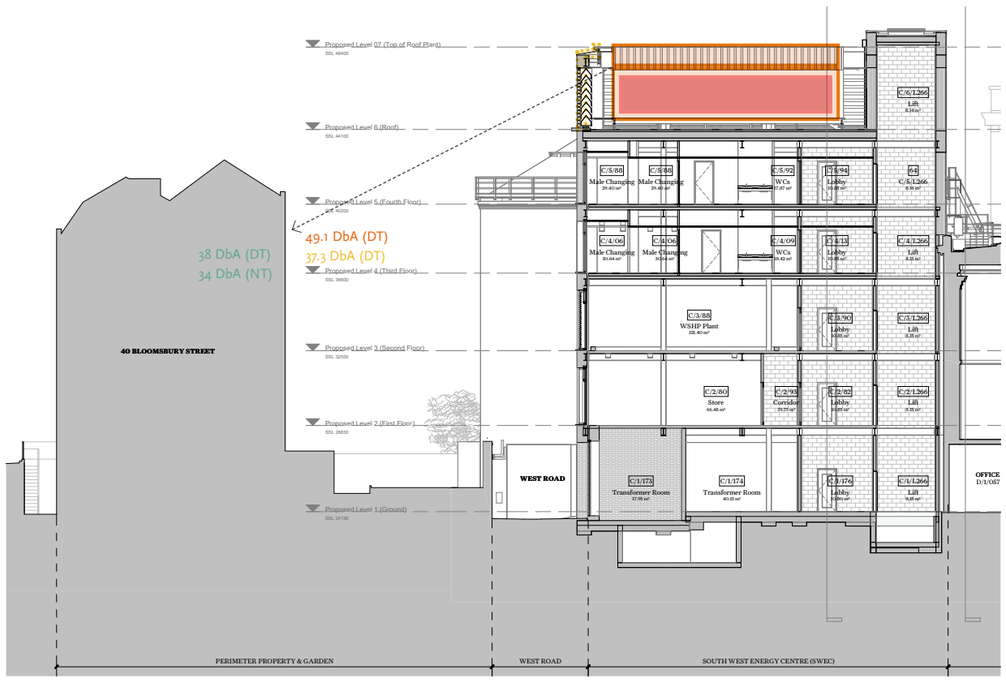
CGI from Montague Street showing the existing portacabins as presented in preapplication meeting 4.

CGI from Montague Street showing the ISS proposals as presented in preapplication meeting 4.

Regarding the SWEC building, the presentation focused on revisions to the design made as a result of acoustic noise surveys undertaken and the resulting required acoustic attenuation requirements for proposed rooftop plant. At this time, this required the height of the proposals to increase between 600-1500mm in height relative to the previously presented proposals at preapplication meetings 2 & 3.

Key for Top image:

- Plant noise
- Primary Attenuation (at source)
- Secondary Attenuation (via freestanding plant screen)
- Noise limits at receptor (Hotel window)



Top:

Illustrative section of SWEC rooftop plant acoustic attenuation in two phases in order to achieve the noise reduction criteria set by LB Camden

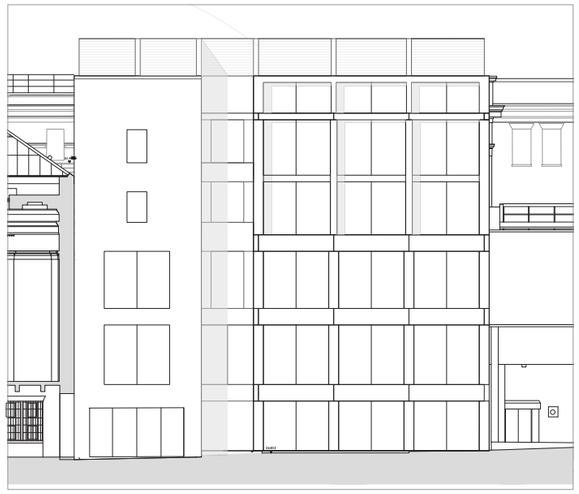
Bottom row left to right:

Comparative SWEC Proposed West Elevations of:

- As presented in Preapplication 2 & 3

- As initially recommended by acoustic specialists following acoustic surveys

- As presented at Preapplication 4 with a revised bespoke detail developed by the Design Team in order to reduce the overall height and resulting impact of the proposals.



SWEC West Elevation: Preapplication 2-3

4m High Screen

(2m brick parapet detail & 2m louvre screen setback)

Initial proposal/recommendation based on acoustic consultant's survey and mitigations

5.4m High Screen

(all acoustic louvres flush with the facade)

SWEC West Elevation: As presented at Preapplication 4

4.3m High Screen

(Acoustic louvres (3.2m high) integrated into brick piers and metal coping (1.1m high))

Visibility of this revised proposal was also illustrated through verified wire-line analysis from key views within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA) that had been previously agreed with LB Camden Officers. These showed the outline of the proposed massing superimposed over existing photographs.

More detailed proposals regarding the materiality and composition of the elevations of the proposed SWEC were also presented, based on the use of yellow London stock facing brickwork with inset charcoal grey metalwork.

Key:

- Outline of proposed massing concealed by foreground buildings i.e. not visible
- Outline of proposed massing visible
- Visibility (in plan view bottom right) of proposed massing within the townscape (ignoring tree canopies/foliage)

Top two rows:

Verified Wireline photographs showing the visibility of the proposed SWEC massing within key townscape views within the Bloomsbury CA agreed with LB Camden and HE. Courtesy of Cityscape Digital.

Bottom right:

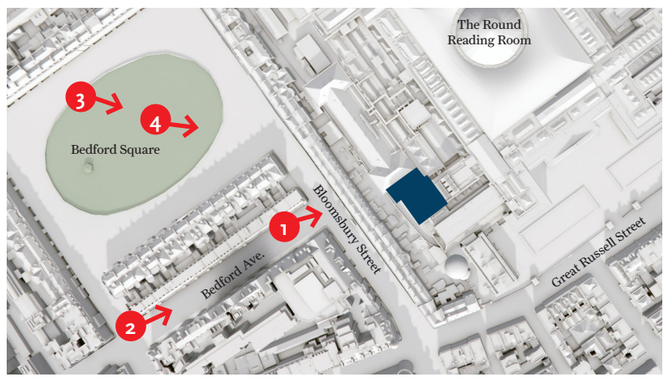
Zone of theoretical visibility for the proposed massing as shared with LB Camden and HE at preapplication meeting 4. The areas of visibility are shown in red wash. It should be noted this is shown ignoring the tree foliage/ canopies.

1 Bedford Ave East

2 Bedford Ave West

3 Bedford Square North

4 Bedford Square South



Key plan

Zone of Proposed Theoretical Visibility (Shown ignoring tree canopies)

Response and Feedback Received
Officers noted the use of materials as having a good relationship with the submitted ERB proposals and neighbouring context and no concerns about the proposed materiality and detail of the elevations were raised.

With that being said, Officers noted the visibility of the proposed massing may be subject to further discussion following review of the information submitted and reference to the grade of listing to neighbouring buildings fronting onto Bedford Square. Officers also raised comment as to whether the proposed support accommodation within the SWEC building could be reduced or located elsewhere in order to reduce the proposed massing of the building. The answer to these queries formed the basis of the agenda for the next preapplication, covered in the following pages.

Proposed ERB on the East Road (Part of the Energy Centre Programme but not part of the scope of this planning application. The ERB was submitted as an advanced application in April 2023).

View looking north along West Road as shared at Preapplication Meeting 4

View looking south along West Road as shared at Preapplication Meeting 4

3.3.6 Pre-application Meeting 5: September 2023

The fifth pre-application meeting was held with both LB Camden and HE Officers on the 13th September 2023. The focus of the meeting was to:

1. Review the previously discussed needs case and brief for the proposed support accommodation in greater detail
2. Provide further background on alternative proposals for the location of support accommodation reviewed by the Museum and illustration of why the proposed is the most suitable design solution. This includes analysis as to why the temporary decant location of 39/40 Russell Square for displaced accommodation during construction is not a viable long-term strategy
3. Provide a design update as to the proposed massing which the design team had reduced in height by over 1.5m since the acoustic survey was undertaken and 750mm since preapplication meeting 4. This includes key design drivers that result in the proposed massing.

The following pages illustrate extracts from the design document prepared and issued to LB Camden and HE prior to and presented at Preapplication Meeting 5 focused on the above points.

Response and Feedback Received

Officers noted their appreciation in being provided with a detailed, in depth, and robust response to questions raised and noted they had no further questions with regards to the materials presented.

Officer's also noted the visible improvement brought by the further reduction in the proposed height of the SWEC building since the previous preapplication meeting and resulting reduced visibility within the surrounding townscape.

Further discussion was then held regarding the timeline for public consultation and application submission.

3.3.7 Assessing Potential Support Accommodation Locations

Summary

Decants are required for functions and people based in areas that will become construction sites or are impacted by construction activity, summarised earlier in this document. The following principles were agreed by Museum stakeholders to enable the appraisal of options regarding where decanted accommodation might be re-located.

Conservation

Avoid interventions to Grade 1 Listed fabric in order to reduce associated cost and programme risk as well as avoiding unsympathetic interventions that introduce harm and may have a long lead time; specifically important is the impact on introduction of services (plumbing and waste for WCs, showers, tea points, ductwork, louvres and plant for ventilation etc.) that would be required to replace welfare provisions and ensure accommodation is fit for purpose.

Location

Identify locations on-site with access to the internal perimeter roads and / or minimal need to traverse through corridors, stairwell and lifts used by all staff (or public) in contaminated clothing or with bulky materials or equipment. Avoid increasing security risk by placing accommodation in locations directly accessible to the public. In addition, the accommodation should be grouped and autonomous from other Museum departments (i.e. collections) and front-of-house space if at all possible. Adjacency to major points of infrastructure is also a key consideration to avoid inefficient operations and additional cost.

Programme & Decant

Avoid considerable and time-consuming enabling works, either from fitting out / conversion or, more specifically, from enabling activities that will require significant stakeholder engagement with parties not otherwise directly impacted by project works.

Such stakeholder engagement heavy activity includes securing input from department heads and trade unions for significant office moves or consolidation to create space for decant. The need to avoid options that would require a significant programme of data collection in the form of utilisation data, time and motion studies or where a dependency on findings of other reviews, should also be considered.

Amelioration

Avoid additional disruption and distraction for project teams and wider business as well as reducing the risk of red-line scope creep by minimising the demands on the residual estate (and the functions and people based in) outside of the ECP site boundary.

Resilience

To allow for, as far as possible, further unforeseen decant needs that are expected to emerge as the Energy Centre Programme and other masterplan projects progress. If possible the proposals should therefore provide opportunity and flexibility to respond to new spatial demand. These may arise through enlarged client-side teams to prepare the collections for decant or for the construction teams to execute the proposals.

Relationship to Masterplan Projects

Additionally, avoid wherever possible placing undue constraint or additional scope of work on future masterplan projects. This includes:

- Creating the need for double decant of accommodation (firstly for the delivery of the Energy Centre Programme and secondly for the delivery of a future masterplan project)
- Installing fabric or services that will have to be re-developed or amended by a future masterplan project
- Locating proposals in areas that will make achieving the vision set out in the Estate Masterplan more difficult due to physical, heritage, access, or other constraints.