

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2024/1078/P	Stephen Hayward	18/04/2024 18:38:19	COMMNT	<p>While I appreciate how this proposal seeks to minimise the impact of the alterations to the exterior of the building, I have concerns over the fate of the interior and most particularly the court room, the space which best communicates the original operation of the building. As the design statement allows this is a 'beautiful and original' space and, I would add, a reminder that the entire complex is more generally viewed as a community asset (in spite of the proposals for private flats etc), as became clear from the outcry that followed the vandalism of the court room in 2020. In short, this is an interior worth restoring and preserving, and in an ideal world, it would be open to the public.</p> <p>The proposal makes a brave attempt at mitigating the impact of the change of use- to a commercial office space- but I am less than convinced by the ability of downstands and nibs to evoke (rather depressingly) what is no longer there, or the relocation of iconic features, like the dock rail, to other parts of the building. In contrast to the gravitas of the original court room, with its fittings and apparatus in situ, the space as reimagined in the heritage statement- as seen in the rendering- has the appearance of a toy court room. As a consequence I wonder whether the approach to the court room could be rethought, taking its cue perhaps from the treatment of the old reading room inside the British Museum? Here the space has been preserved and showcased as representing the soul of the institution.</p>
