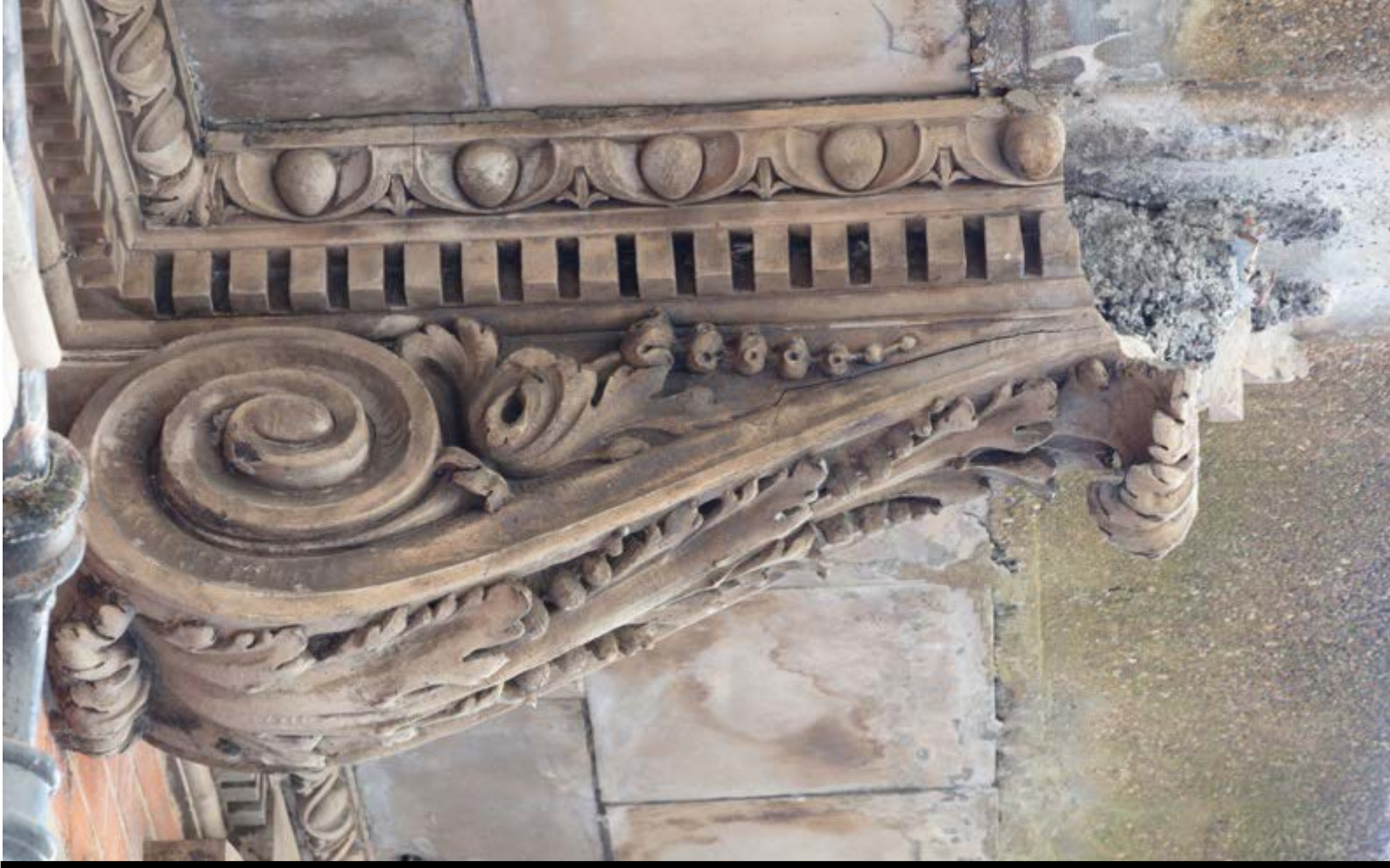


Terracotta Balcony Replacement
Design, Access, and Heritage Statement

UCL Student Union Building, 25 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0AY

Prepared for Stonewest Limited, on behalf of University College London

July 2024

Project: 2022-013

Revision: 0.0
STATUS: Issued for information

ingramconsultancy

CONSULTANTS IN THE CONERVATION AND REPAIR OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND THEIR SITES

Terracotta Balcony Replacement

Design, Access, and Heritage Statement

UCL Student Union Building, 25 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0AY

Prepared for Stonewest Limited, on behalf of University College London

Schedule of Revisions

Revision	Date	Description
00	02/07/2024	Issued for information

Principal author: -

Graham Abrey MRICS BSc (Hons) Pg Dip (Bldg Cons)

Chartered Building Surveyor & Historic Building Consultant

Ingram Consultancy Limited

Checked by: -

Gillian Reading

Practice Manager

Ingram Consultancy Limited

Project No: 2022-013
Date: July 2024
File reference: 2022-013-DesignAccessStatement-BALCONY-v00.docx
Issue/Revision No: 00

Contents

Section 1

Introduction

Scope of this Document

1.1 This document is the Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement for the replacement of the existing first floor level terracotta balcony and concrete slab at 25 Gordon Street for which planning permission is sought. The proposals include the following:

A. **Replacement of existing missing and damaged terracotta.** Much of the existing terracotta is either missing or badly damaged and will be replaced with new traditional handmade terracotta to match the original details.

B. **New reinforced concrete balcony slab.** The existing clinker concrete balcony slab has been patch repaired and is in poor condition with corrosion of the steel gallows brackets. The gallows brackets will be retained and repaired and a new reinforced concrete slab installed.

C. **New mastic asphalt waterproof surface.** The existing mastic asphalt will be replaced with new mastic asphalt and a grey solar reflective paint. Mastic asphalt will be applied over a new lightweight concrete screed laid to fall towards new drainage outlets.

D. **New balcony drainage outlets.** The existing small diameter cast iron drainage outlets will be replaced with larger cast iron outlets with grills to manage existing and future rainfall more effectively. It may be necessary to replace the existing cast iron downpipes below the balcony if the existing pipes cannot be separated to install the new outlets. New drainage pipes will be cast iron in a slightly larger size.

E. **Installation of a mansafe system**. The balcony parapet wall is too low for safe access for cleaning and maintenance of the balcony. A mansafe system will be installed and attached to the building façade wall at discreet locations to provide safe access.

F. **Terracotta and brickwork repair.** As part of the balcony replacement, localised small scale brickwork and terracotta conservation and repair will be completed to resolve cracking, poorly executed past repair and damaged blocks.

G. **Terracotta and brickwork cleaning.** Brickwork and terracotta below the balcony will be cleaned to remove superficial soiling and staining.

Requirement for Planning Permission

1.2 The Student Union Building is not a listed building but the building is part of the London Borough of Camden Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area, sub-area map 3 confirms the Student Union Building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. This means the building is important within the local context and is valued.

1.3 Replacing the terracotta balcony with new terracotta which accurately matches the original in all terms, for example, colour, size, material, quality, and appearance is not normally considered a *material change* in planning terms, however most alterations, including partial demolition to existing buildings in England are considered to be *building operations* and planning permission is normally required. Case law indicates that demolition and replacement of the balcony would be considered building operations. Furthermore, the scale of the proposed works is likely to be considered having the potential to 'materially affect the external appearance' and therefore the London Borough of Camden as local planning authority may wish to control the proposed works.

1.4 The decision was made to apply for planning permission as the costs of consultation are almost the same as costs for the preparation and application for formal permission.

1.5 In the event that London Borough of Camden decide planning permission is not required the authority would have had the opportunity to review the detailed proposals and provide a formal decision. This would create a formal record for University College London.

Justification for the Proposed Works

1.6 A detailed justification for the proposed works is included in section 3 of this document.

A Heritage Asset of Local Interest

1.7 25 Gordon Street is not a listed building but it is a non-designated heritage asset of local interest and value. London Borough of Camden in the Bloomsbury Conservation Management Plan identify the buildings as making a positive contribution to the conservation area and surrounding heritage assets[1]. The buildings mass, architectural design and use of red bricks and terracotta (incorrectly referred to as stone) is noted for its architectural emphasis and value.

Documents

1.8 The following design documents are included with the application for planning permission:

	Existing Elevations, Plans, Sections
2022-013-GS-EX-ELV-01	Balcony. Existing Gordon Street Elevation
2022-013-GS-EX-ELV-02	Balcony. Existing Gordon Street Elevation (Not to Scale)
2022-013-GS-EX-PLN-01	Balcony. Existing Plans and Section 01
2022-013-GS-EX-PLN-02	Balcony. Existing Plans and Section 01 (Not to Scale)
2022-013-GS-EX-SEC-01	Balcony. Existing Section 01 (Not to Scale)
2022-013-GS-EX-SEC-02	Balcony. Existing Section 02
2022-013-GS-EX-SEC-03	Balcony. Existing Section 03
2022-013-GS-EX-SEC-04	Balcony. Existing Section 04
2022-013-GS-EX-SEC-05	Balcony. Existing Section 05
2022-013-GS-EX-DE-01	Balcony. Existing Detail from Section 01
	Proposed Elevations, Plans, Sections
2022-013-GS-PR-ELV-01	Balcony. Proposed Gordon Street Elevation
2022-013-GS-PR-ELV-02	Balcony. Proposed Gordon Street Elevation (Not to Scale)
2022-013-GS-PR-PLN-01	Balcony. Proposed Plans and Section 01
2022-013-GS-PR-PLN-02	Balcony. Proposed Plans and Section 01 (Not to Scale)
2022-013-GS-PR-SEC-01	Balcony. Proposed Section 01
2022-013-GS-PR-SEC-02	Balcony. Proposed Section 02
2022-013-GS-PR-SEC-03	Balcony. Proposed Section 03
2022-013-GS-PR-SEC-04	Balcony. Proposed Section 04
2022-013-GS-PR-SEC-05	Balcony. Proposed Section 05
	Terracotta Block Details
2022-013-GS-PR-TD-01	Terracotta Block Details: Cornice Block
2022-013-GS-PR-TD-02	Terracotta Block Details: Soffit Blocks

[1] Camden Council *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*. Pages 28 and 133. Adopted draft 18 April 2011, and *Bloomsbury CA Sub Area 3 Townscape Appraisal map*

2022-013-GS-PR-TD-03	Terracotta Block Details: Console Blocks - Sheet 1 of 2
2022-013-GS-PR-TD-03	Terracotta Block Details: Console Blocks - Sheet 2 of 2
	Setting out
2024-013-GS-PR-SET-01	Terracotta soffit setting out
	Construction Phases
2022-013-GS-PR-PH-01	Balcony. Soffit Block Installation. Phase 1, type 1 cornice blocks
2022-013-GS-PR-PH-02	Balcony. Soffit Block Installation. Phase 2, type 2 soffit blocks
2022-013-GS-PR-PH-03	Balcony. Soffit Block Installation. Phase 3. type 3 cornice blocks
2022-013-GS-PR-PH-04	Balcony. Soffit Block Installation. Phase 4, console blocks
2022-013-GS-PR-PH-05	Balcony. Soffit Block Installation. Phase 5, egg and dart blocks
	Construction Details
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-01	Wall Upstand and Balcony Outlets
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-02	Balcony Screed and Balcony Outlets
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-03	Terracotta Console Fixing Details
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-04	Balcony Slab & Terracotta details at Section 02
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-05	Balcony Slab & Terracotta details at Section 03
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-06	Balcony Slab & Terracotta details at Section 04
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-07	Balcony Outlets, Slab & Terracotta details at Section 05
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-08	Lightning Conductor Roof Penetrations
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-09	Cable Conduit Roof Penetrations
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-10	Alternative parapet wall detail with brickwork
2022-013-GS-PR-CD-11	Terracotta soffit tile mortar joint design
	Documents
2022-013-UCL-GS-BAL-SPEC	Terracotta Balcony Replacement. Works Specification. RIBA Stage 4

Publications

1.9 The following publications have been consulted during the preparation of this document:

- Camden Council. *Camden Local Plan.* 2017
- Camden Council. *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy.* 18 April 2011
- Camden Council. *Camden Planning Guidance – Design*. January 2021
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. *'National Planning Policy Framework'.* December 2023
- Historic England. *'Conservation, Principles, Polices and Guidance'.* March 2015
- English Heritage *now* Historic England. *'Informed Conservation: understanding historic buildings and their landscapes for conservation'.* March 2003
- Historic England. *'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment; Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2'.* July 2015
- Historic England. *'The Setting of Heritage Assets; Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3'.* 2nd Edition December 2017

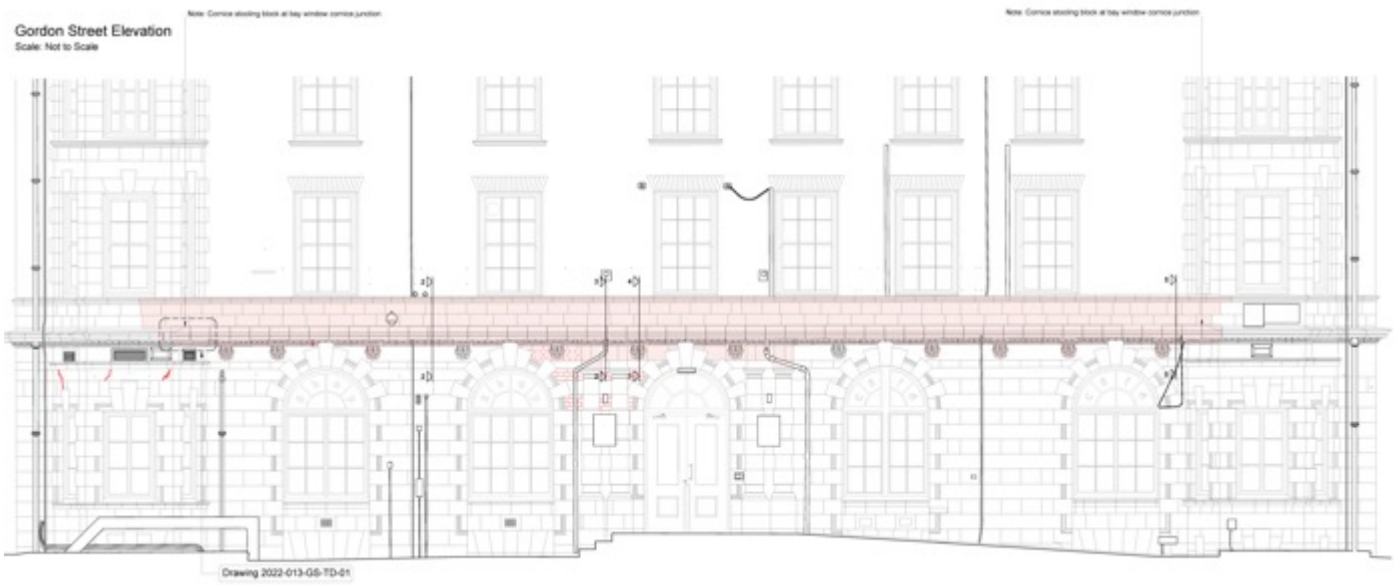


Figure 1. The Gordon Street elevation. The rebuilt balcony is shown by the **red** hatching

Figure 2. 25 Gordon Street in c.1920 when the hospital shared the building with the London School of Tropical Medicine. CC BY SA 4.0

Section 2

Design Statement

Balcony form and design

2.1 The original balcony form and design has been altered and harmed by past intervention and repair. The original terracotta cornice and most of the soffit tiles have been removed and crudely replaced with in-situ concrete.

2.2 The proposals will restore the original balcony design and materials using traditional handmade terracotta blocks and tiles created by a specialist terracotta manufacturer. The terracotta will closely match the existing original colours.

2.3 The balcony form and design will accurately replicate the original and will restore the building forming enhancing the building's contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

2.4 The full scope of repair and specification is included in design documents submitted as part of this application for planning permission.

Proposals

Replacing existing terracotta balcony

2.5 The existing terracotta balcony will be replaced with new traditional handmade terracotta blocks and tiles to match the original details and colour variations. Replacement items include:

- **Terracotta consoles** – the large scrolled bracket which visually support the balcony. The consoles are hollow and encase structural steel brackets which support the structural steel slab
- **Terracotta soffit tiles** – the balcony soffit is clad with 50mm thick terracotta tiles. These will be replaced with minor modification to accommodate new stainless steel restraint fixings. The tile size, format and appearance will match the original design.
- **Terracotta egg and dart band course** – the egg and dart course on the balcony soffit will be replaced with new hollow terracotta blocks to match the original design. The blocks will be filled with a lightweight hydraulic lime concrete.
- **Balcony cornice**. The missing balcony cornice will be reinstated with new hollow terracotta blocks with stainless steel restraint fixings. The blocks will be filled with a lightweight hydraulic lime concrete.
- Parapet wall. The existing terracotta balcony parapet wall and copings be replaced with new hollow terracotta blocks to match the original details.

Retaining existing blocks where possible

2.6 It might be possible to retain and reuse some of the egg and dart blocks, parapet blocks and coping blocks if they can be separated from the existing hard cement mortars without damage. This will be reviewed by the design consultants when the existing balcony is dismantled. Existing blocks will only be reused where they are sound, free from damage and defects and if they will not create a visual 'patchwork' of repair.

New structural concrete slab with screed

2.7 The existing clinker concrete slab is in poor condition and degraded by long term water ingress. A new reinforced concrete slab will be installed to restore the balcony structure.

2.8 A new concrete screed will be installed to create a 1:80 fall towards the rainwater outlets.

Clean, repair and protect existing steel balcony support brackets

2.9 The existing steel support brackets will be exposed following removal of the existing terracotta and balcony slab. The metalwork will be cleaned to remove all existing corrosion and allow detailed inspection by the structural engineer. Wherever possible the structural supports will be repaired using steel plate repairs. Inspection may reveal extensive corrosion and replacement with new steel support brackets may be required. New items will be designed and sized to match the existing as closely as possible. Once repair and replacement is complete, the steel members will be finished with a protective anti-corrosion coating.

New cast iron rainwater outlets

2.10 The existing cast iron outlets are too small for current rainfall volumes. The outlets will be replaced with slightly larger cast iron outlets which meet existing rainfall demands plus a further 20% increase in peak rainfall with predicted climate change impact. If the existing cast iron downpipes below the balcony can be separated from the existing outlets they will be reused, however it may be necessary to replace the downpipes with new cast iron. If the downpipes are replaced, new traditional cast iron downpipes will be used in a slightly larger size to accommodate increased rainfall.

2.11 The pipes will be painted black to match the existing.

Mastic asphalt balcony surface

2.12 The balcony will be finished with mastic asphalt to match the existing original design. The surface will be finished with a grey solar reflective paint to provide a discreet finish.

Brickwork and terracotta repair

2.13 Replacement of the existing terracotta consoles will require removal of the bricks around each bracket because the terracotta blocks are built into the façade. The bricks will be replaced with new handmade bricks to match the existing variations in size, colour and surface texture. Localised terracotta blocks below the balcony have been poorly repaired with cement mortars. These blocks will be replaced with new terracotta to match the original details.

2.14 Cracking and damage in brickwork and terracotta around the balcony will be repaired. Repairs will be completed using hydraulic lime mortars and grouts with natural pigments where required to match the existing terracotta and brick.

Façade cleaning

2.15 The brick and terracotta façade at ground level will be cleaned using a combination of water steam and a mild masonry detergent. It may be necessary to clean the terracotta using Prosoco Light Duty Restoration cleaning which is a specialist acid based cleaner specifically designed for cleaning of historic brickwork and terracotta. This cleaning is more able to reduce surface staining without damage with appropriate experience. Cleaning work will be completed to remove superficial grime and staining and preserve the patina of age.

New Materials

Terracotta

2.16 New terracotta will be manufactured by either Hathern Terra-Cotta or Darwen Terracotta and Faience. Both companies are the last remaining manufacturers of traditional hand-made terracotta in the United Kingdom.

2.17 To ensure the existing original blocks are accurately replicated, examples of existing blocks will be carefully removed from site and sent to the suppliers for replication.

2.18 New terracotta will match the existing original colour range with a smooth fireskin surface. New soffit, cornice and console blocks will be modified slightly from the original design to accommodate a modern stainless steel restraint fixing solution; this will not alter the appearance or original design function.

Construction and repair mortars

2.19 New mortars will be made from natural hydraulic lime and graded washed sharp sands. Cement mortars will not be used.

2.20 New terracotta blocks will be filled with a lightweight concrete composed of natural hydraulic lime and Leca or Lytag aggregate. This practice replicates the traditional practice of filling hollow terracotta blocks with clinker concrete but without the deleterious properties of clinker concrete. Hollow terracotta blocks must be filled to provide support to the block.

2.21 Full details of the proposed mortars are included in the specification which is included with this planning application.

Design and Supervision

2.22 The design has been completed by Graham Abrey of Ingram Consultancy, a conservation accredited Chartered Building Surveyor and Colin Seabrook, a conservation accredited Structural Engineer both of whom are historic building specialist with a proven track record of success in the retention, repair and conservation of historic buildings and structures. Both consultants will be retained by University College London to provide technical supervision of the works.

Specialist Contractor

2.23 University College London will appoint a specialist contractor with a proven track record of repair and replacement of traditional architectural terracotta.

Justification for the Proposed Work

2.24 Replacement and repair of the balcony is required for a number of reasons.

A. A substantial amount of the existing original terracotta is in poor condition with extensive cracking and failure. The structural slab is saturated with water with localised failure of the mastic asphalt balcony waterproof surface. Steel balcony support brackets and clinker concrete infill within the large terracotta consoles have expanded with decay causing cracking and loss of terracotta.

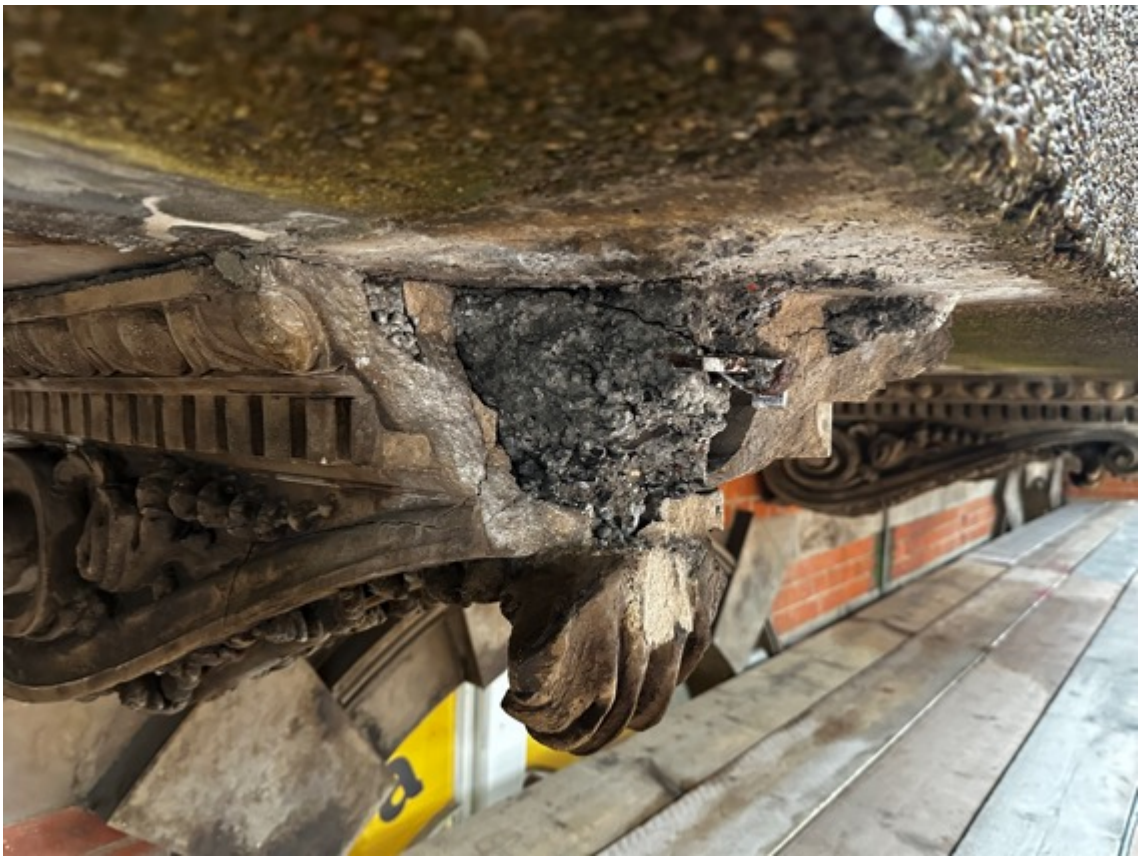
B. Past poorly executed intervention has resulted in the loss of the original terracotta cornice and half of the terracotta soffit. These elements have been replaced by crude concrete.

C. Sections of terracotta have fallen from the balcony soffit and a protection scaffold has been installed to protect the public and building users.

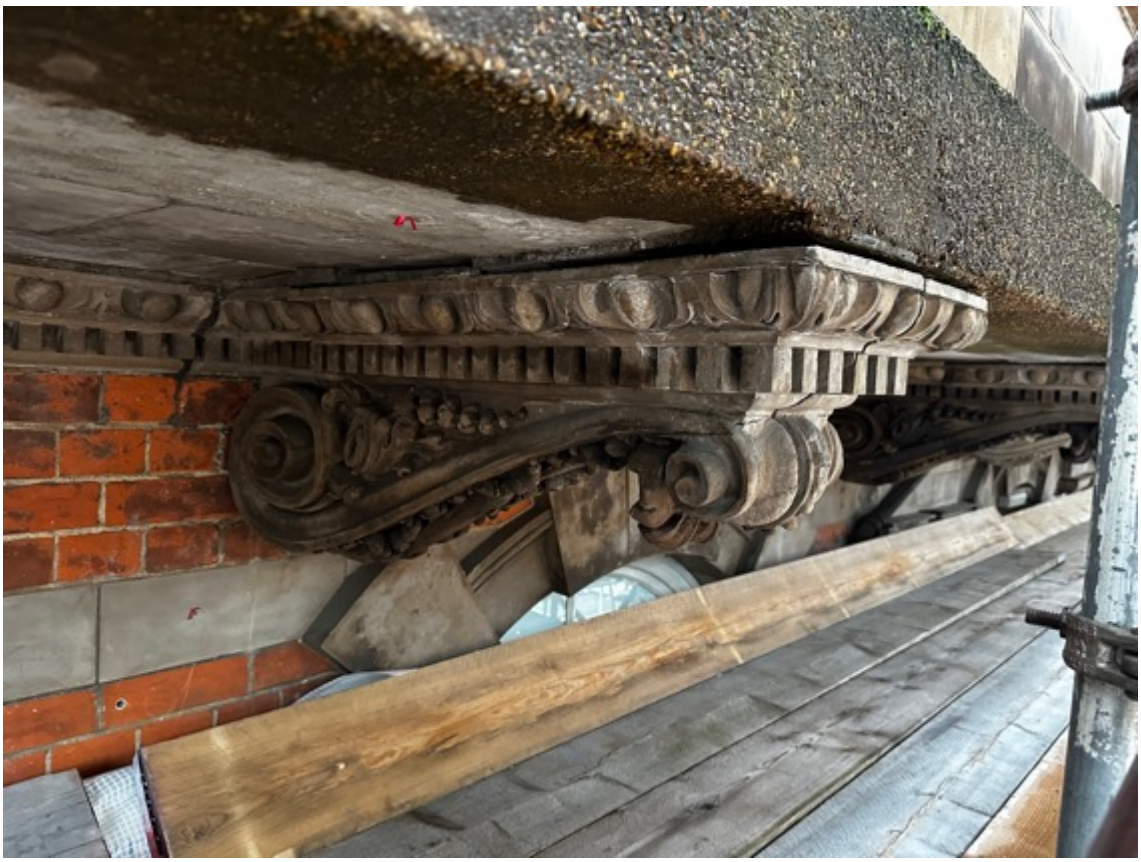
Justification

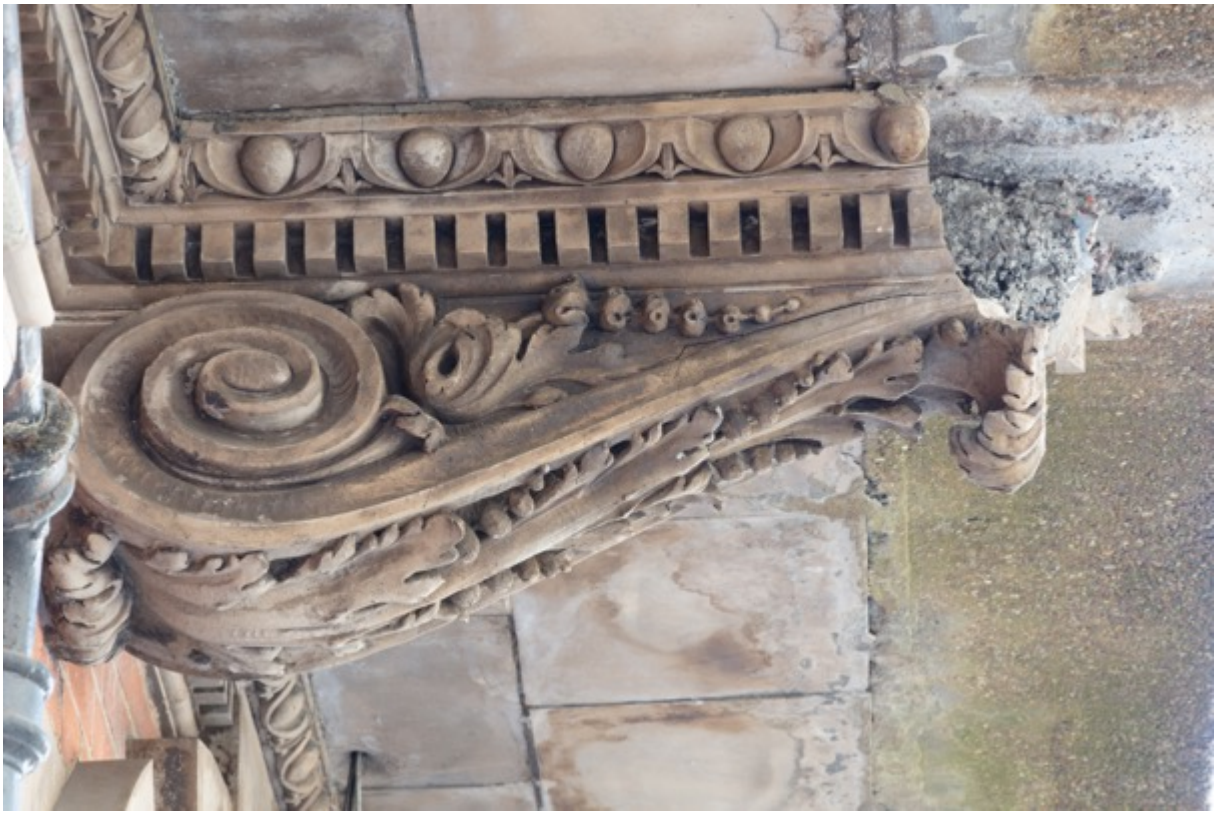
2.25 The proposals seek to replace the balcony to replicate the original design based on extant site evidence using new handmade terracotta that will also replicate the original material. Where possible original terracotta in good condition will be retained.

2.26 Restoring the original balcony will enhance the building's contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the setting of surrounding heritage assets

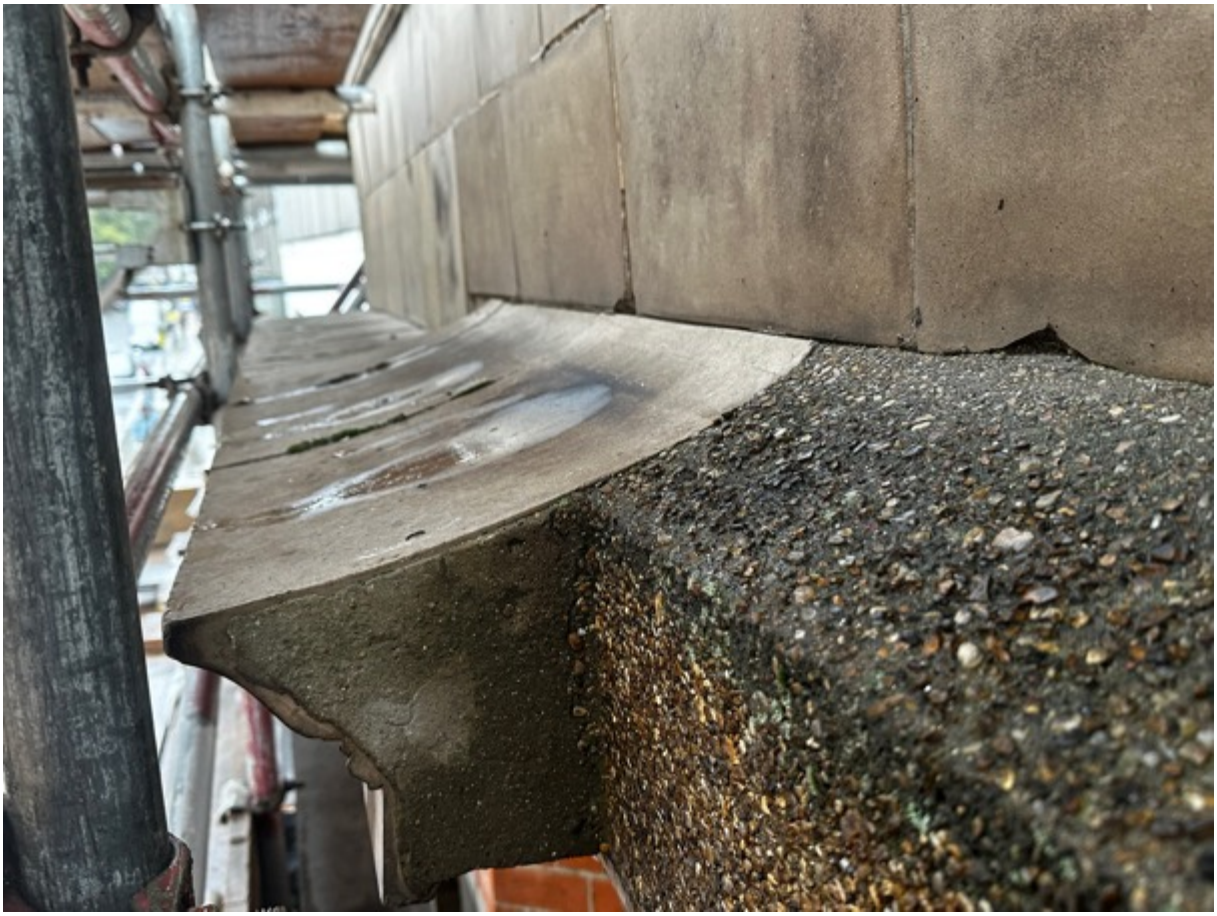


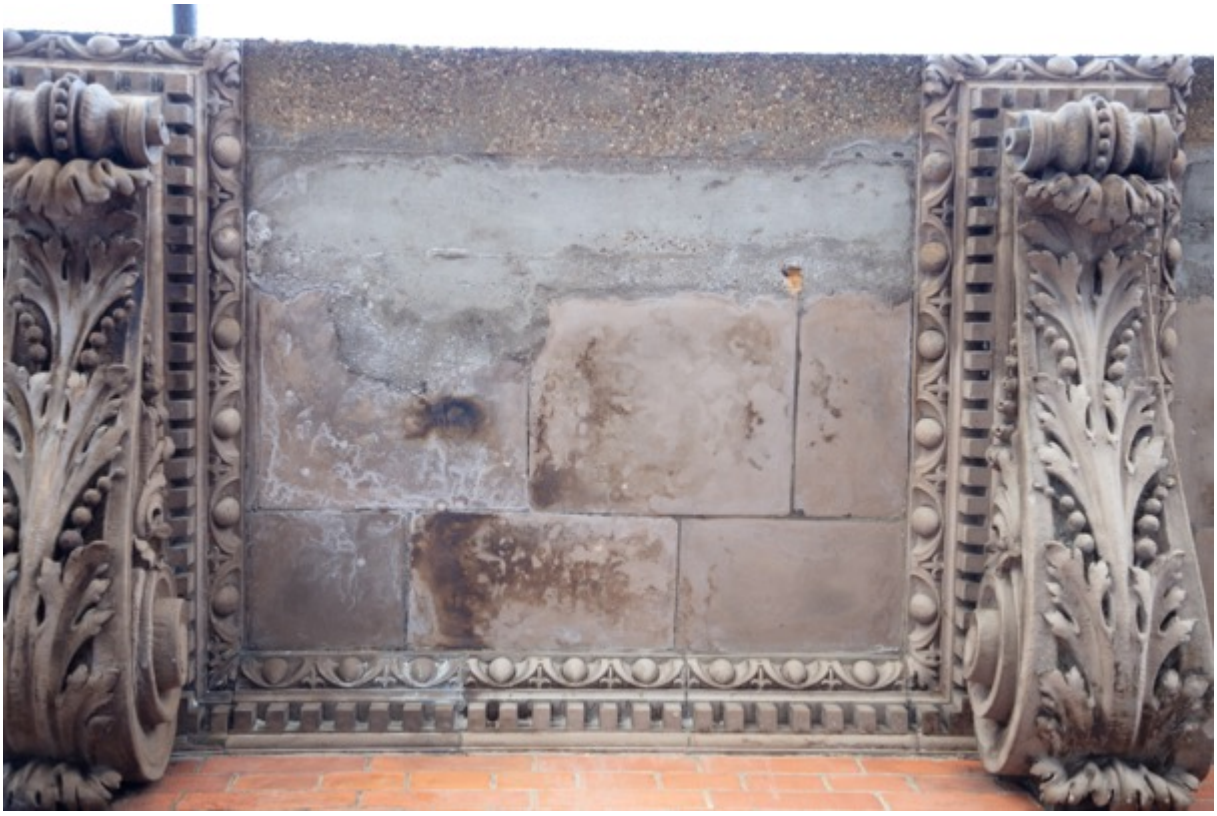
Figures 3 and **4**. Expansive corrosion of the steel balcony support and expansion of the saturated clinker concrete within the terracotta console has caused extensive cracking and failure. The image below shows the missing terracotta cornice which has been replaced with a crude exposed aggregate concrete repair.



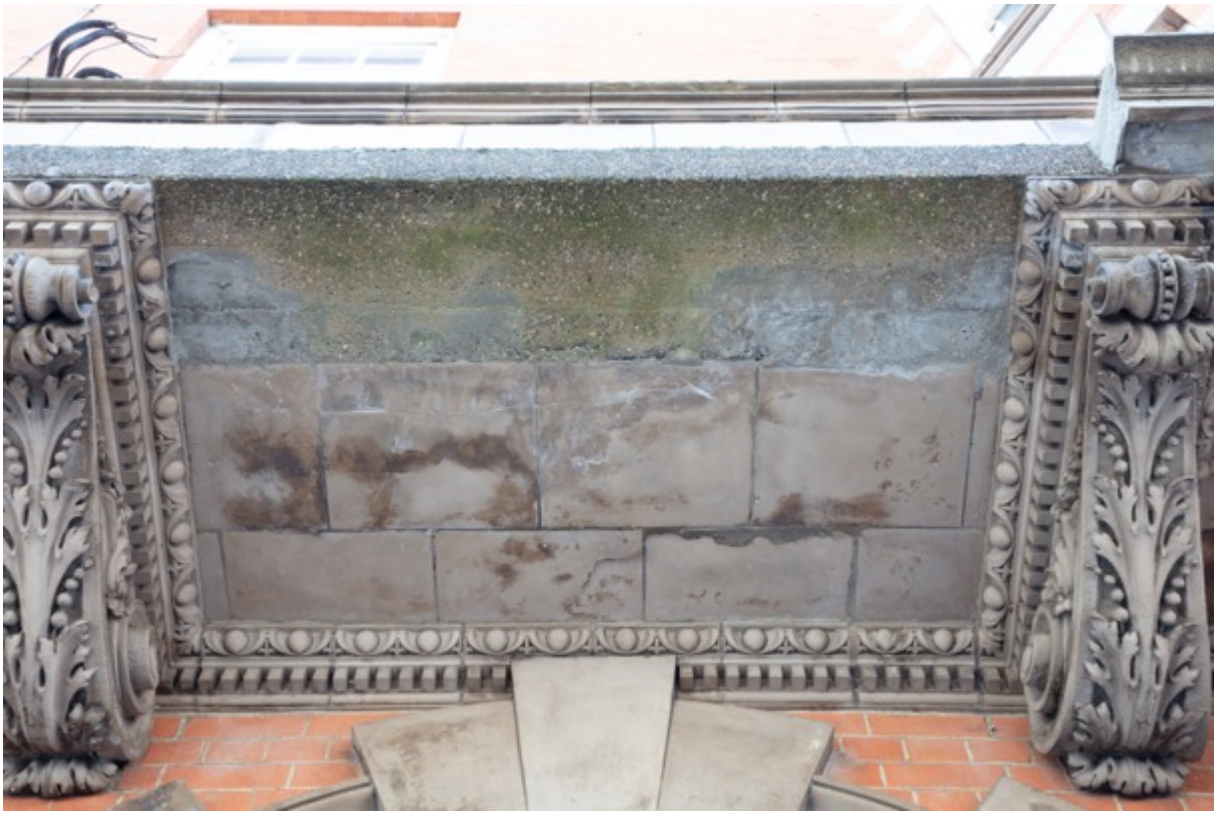


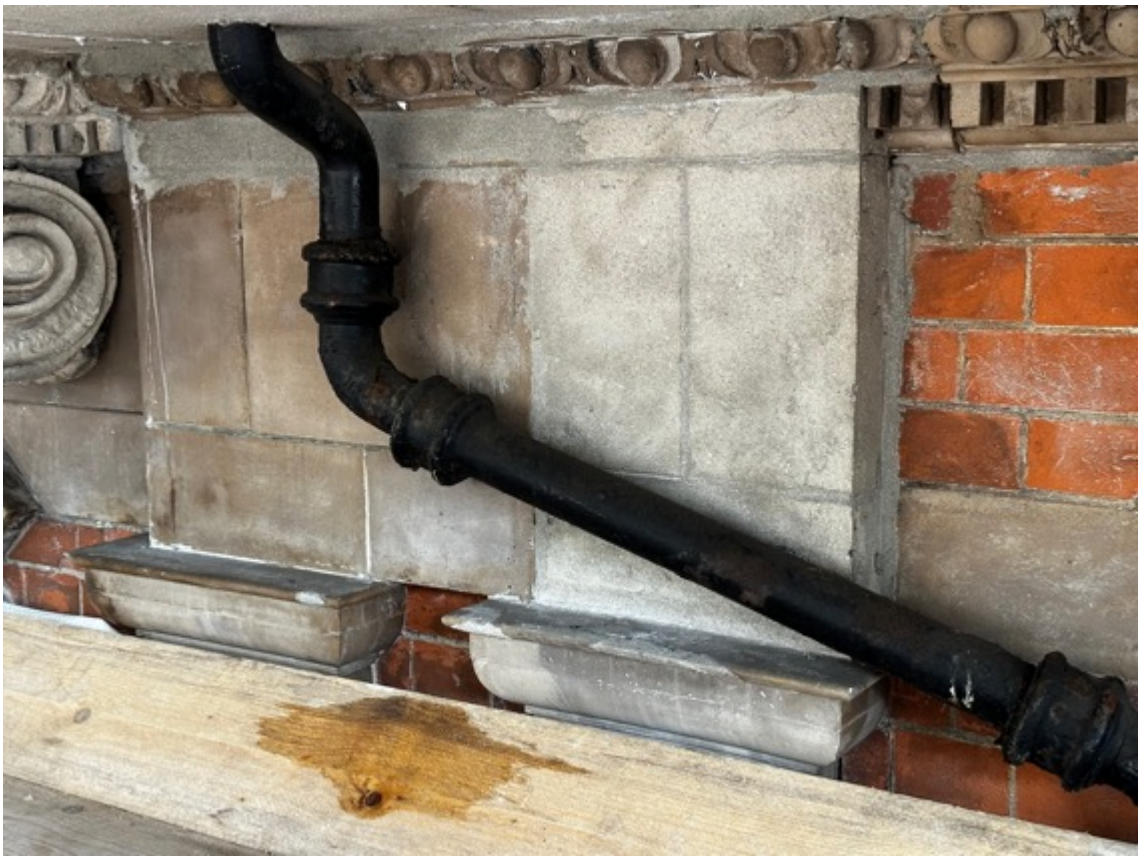
Figures 5 and **6**. A view of a terracotta console where the front section has broken away. Cracking extends across the full length of the console. Note, terracotta soffit tiles at the front of the balcony have been replaced with a cement render. The image below shows a section of original terracotta cornice surviving at the left hand (south) end.



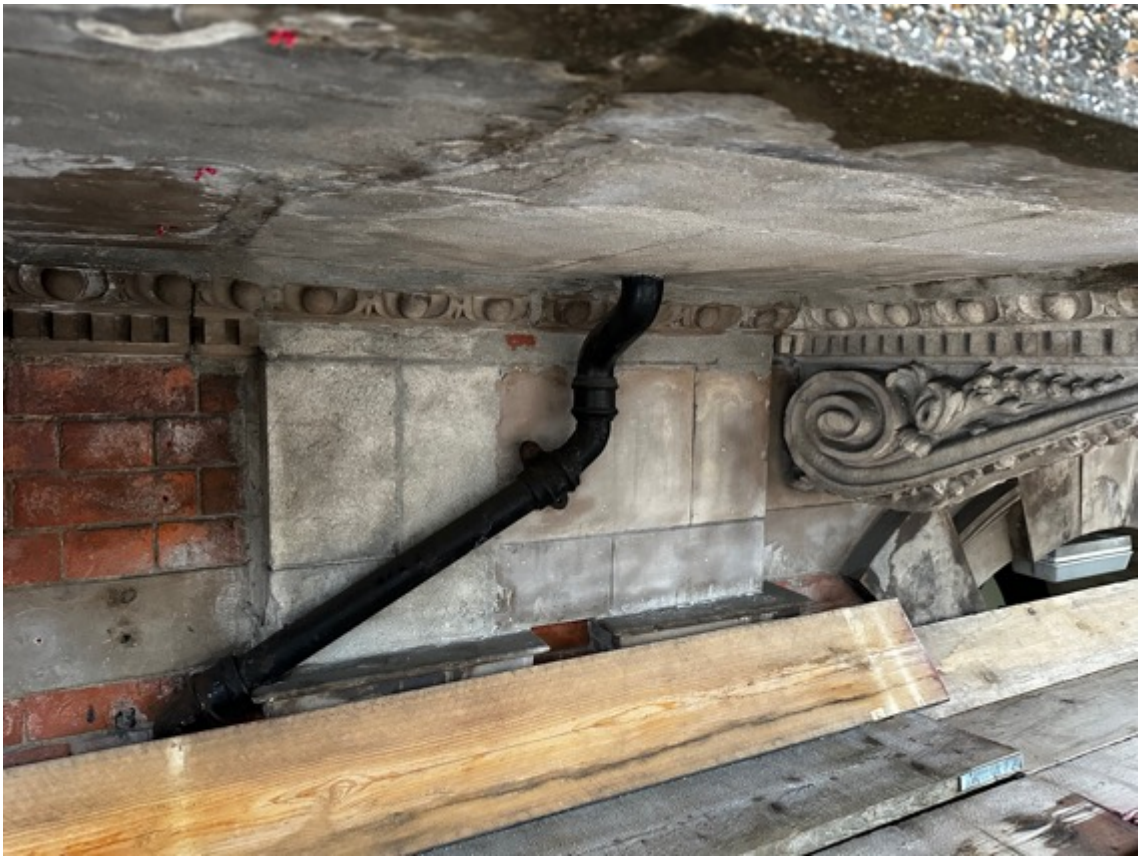


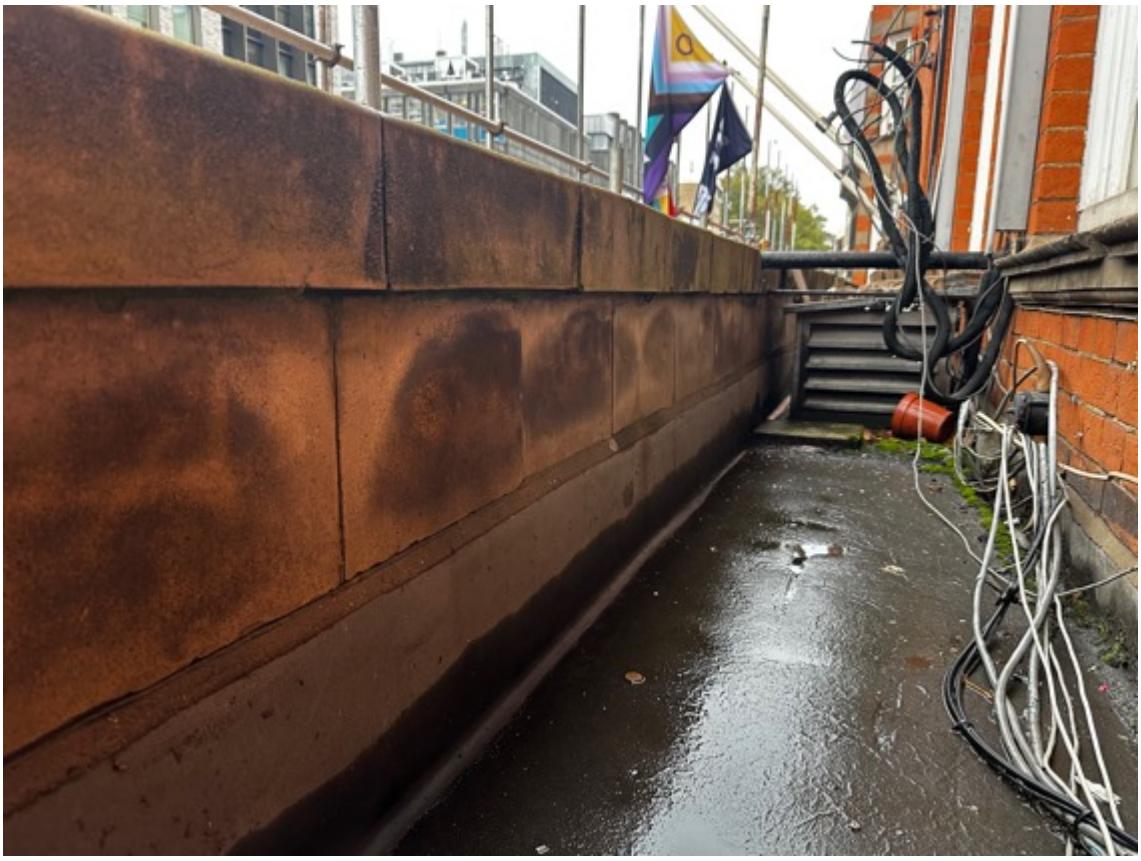
Figures 7 and **8**. Two sections of the balcony soffit illustrating missing tiles along the front edge and remaining tiles with extensive damage. This condition applies to the entire soffit.



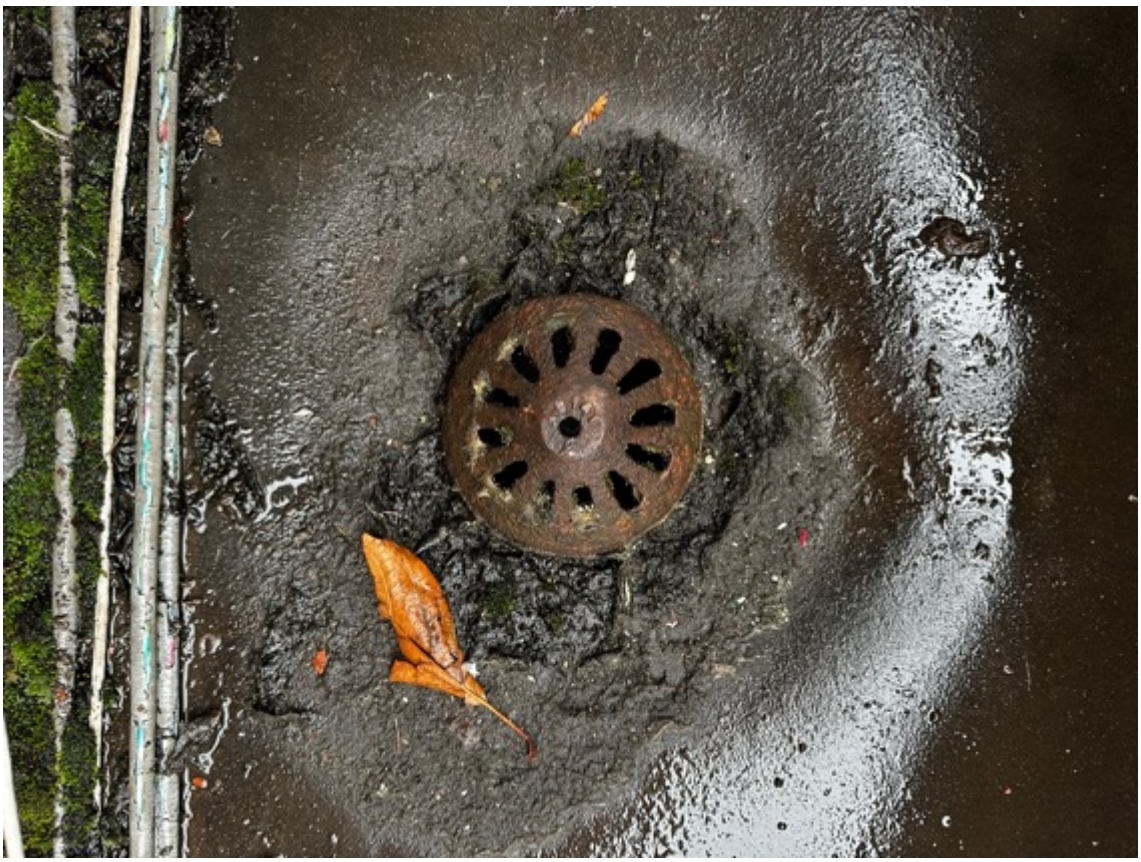


Figures 9 and **10**. Two areas of ashlar terracotta below the balcony which have been crudely replaced with cement render. This work appears to relate to alterations to the rainwater drainage.





Figures 11 and **12**. The existing mastic asphalt. Cracks, splits and bulges are present. One of the two existing cast iron rainwater outlets. The internal dimension is only 44mm and there is very little drainage fall towards the outlets



Section 3

Access Statement

3.1 The balcony is only accessible for cleaning and maintenance of the balcony. The existing parapet wall is too low to provide safe access without arrest provisions. Installation of a new balcony screed to create suitable drainage falls will reduce the parapet wall height slightly making the parapet wall less compliant. To achieve safe access a new mansafe system will be installed.

3.2 Access to the building for existing and future building users is not affected by the proposals.

Section 4

Heritage Statement

Building History and construction[2]

4.1 The building construction date is unknown but it was believed to have been built in c.1900 as the Endsleigh Palace Hotel which originally included a nursing home in the top floor apartment.

4.2 The building is constructed with solid masonry walls of red brick and a buff coloured terracotta with a smooth fireskin surface. The building is nine stories in height with the upper two stories created in the mansard roof with window dormers. The façade includes architectural enrichment in terracotta with banded rustication at ground floor level, a terracotta clad balcony at first floor supported by consoles, terracotta window cills, string courses, a large cornice with consoles at seventh floor and two full height end bays on the Gordon Street elevation decorated with terracotta banding.

4.3 In 1915 the hotel was requisitioned by the War Office and converted into a hospital for officers which opened in July 1915. The hospital included an operating theatre, a sterilising room, an x-ray room and lifts, once of which was large enough to accommodate a stretcher.

4.4 The war Office paid the ordinary allowance of three shillings per day per patient, however this was wholly inadequate and the hospital was reliant on private donations. During the war the Joint War Committee had endowed thirty beds for the treatment of sailors and soldiers who had contracted tropical diseases. Following the end of the First World War the hospital was acquired by Seamen's Hospital Society and the Hospital of Tropical Diseases was created and opened on 11 November 1920. The London School of Tropical Medicine moved from the Albert Dock Hospital to 25 Gordon Street and they shared the building with the hospital until in 1929 the renamed London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine moved to a new building in Keppel Street. The hospital was then altered to increase patient accommodation from 56 to 76 beds.

4.5 At the outbreak of World War Two the hospital was evacuated to a new site in Greenwich. The building remained in the ownership of University College London and is the Student Union Building.

Significance

Measuring significance

4.6 In conservation, 'significance' encompasses a broad range of considerations about what may constitute the special value or 'interest' of a building or place; these are referred to as the 'heritage asset'. Commonly, a mix of factors may contribute to this special value, such as a building's architectural quality and association with important people or cultural events. Sometimes, these factors may not be immediately apparent, such as the use of pioneering construction technology, fine craftsmanship, or the special social or economic role a building or place has within a community.

4.7 A statement of significance provides a concise account of the reasons why heritage assets are valued and why they should be protected and preserved. The statement can provide a more thorough appraisal than a listing description alone. They can help clarify which items or elements have little or no value, or which actively detract from significance, to allow for exploration of opportunities for enhancement or change.

[2] Sources: Wikipedia and https://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/endsleighpalace.html

4.8 25 Gordon Street is not a listed building, it is a non-designated heritage asset of local historic interest. The size and scale of the building and architectural design with the use of red brick and a buff coloured terracotta make a positive contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation area and the setting of the University College, University Chemistry Laboratory, grade II listed and built in 1912-13 to the design of F M Simpson, the grade I listed University Central I Block, Flaxman Gallery, Library and South Wing built between 1827 and 1181 to the designs of W Wilkins, JP Gandy-Deering, T L Donaldson and T Hayer Lewis.

4.9 The following is a guide to comparative levels of significance:

- **Exceptionally significant**: Nationally and/or internationally significant aesthetic, cultural, evidential or communal significance; exceptional, unique, and intact features of highest quality; nationally and/or internationally important associations with people or events; the setting of the heritage asset is an intrinsic part of the overall significance and is largely intact and or well preserved; unquestionable group value
- **Highly significant**: important historic or architectural features; high quality of workmanship; potential for nationally important archaeology; largely intact and/or rare examples of a building type or technique; the setting of the heritage asset makes an important contribution to the significance, values, and legibility of the heritage asset – change and alteration to the setting may be present, but evidential, historic, aesthetic and/or communal values remain; important group value.
- **Significant**: formal or aesthetic significance, architectural character or notable features, including areas with potential for significant enhancement; setting contributes to the heritage asset's legibility, form and/or scale, but includes extant alterations which have altered or diminished the special interest; some positive group value
- **Low significance**: little or no architectural or heritage significance or area of lost significance; the setting of the heritage has been extensively altered to the point where it has low value and significance to the heritage asset.
- **Not significant**: of no heritage interest
- **Detrimental**: features or areas that detract from a building's special significance

Significance of 25 Gordon Street

4.10 Although not a listed building (a designated heritage asset), 25 Gordon Street is considered to be S**IGNIFICANT** for its scale, simple design and use of materials and contribution to Bloomsbury Conservation area and the setting of the University College London.

Impact of the Proposed Works

4.10.1 The proposal to replace the terracotta balcony with new terracotta details and a new structural concrete slab with waterproofing to match the original details has no impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area of neighbouring heritage assets.

4.11 The proposals are compliant with:

I. *National Planning Policy Framework*, December 2023 policies 200, 205, 209, 211, and 213.

II. London Borough of Camden, *Camden Local Plan*, 2017, policy D1 Design, policy D2 Heritage, and policy CC2 Adapting to Climate Change

III. *Heritage',* S26 *'Views'* and S28 'Design' and Westminster City Council, Unitary Development Plan, adopted January 2007, policy DES1 *'Principles of Urban Design and Conservation'* and Westminster City Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance *'Repairs and Alterations to Listed Buildings',* adopted December 1995.

IV. Camden Planning Guidance, *Design*, January 2021, section 3.

V. Camden Council's *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* and in particular paragraph 5.23, bullet point three, and paragraphs 5.28, 5.29, 5.31 5.32, and 5.33,

Ingram Consultancy Limited

Consultants in the Conservation and Repair of Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments

Holly Cottage, Lower Street, Upton Noble, Somerset BA4 6BB, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 [**0**]**7710 352 859** E-mail: enquiries@ingram-consultancy.co.uk
www.ingram-consultancy.co.uk