

**London Borough of Camden**  
**Development Management Regeneration and Planning**  
**Town Hall, Judd Street**  
**London WC1H 9JE**

FAO Nick Baxter

Dear Officer,

**Ref: PP-13623054**

**Planning and Listed Building Consent Application: German Historical Institute Security System (CCTV and Video Intercom Panel) and replacement Condenser Unit.**

**Address: German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury Square, London, Camden WC1A 2NJ**  
**Grade II Listed Building # 1244453**

### **Introduction**

On behalf of the German Historical Institute (GHI), we enclose a Planning and Listed Building Consent application for alterations to the Grade II Listed Building at 17 Bloomsbury Square, London, WC1A 2NJ. The proposed alterations include the installation of: a replacement condenser unit within the basement level external lightwell; the replacement and addition of CCTV cameras to both internal and external areas of the building; and the addition of an intercom video entry panel to railings at the principal entrance. The proposals aim to improve the usability, security and accessibility of the building for the Institute and its visitors. The proposals are presented in supporting documents that have been prepared on behalf of the GHI, in collaboration with Hann Tucker (acoustic consultants), Harley Haddow (MEP and security consultants), and Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (heritage consultants).

### **Submission content**

This current application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-13623054). The supporting documents within the submission include:

- Application forms
- Location Plan at scale 1:1250 and Block Plan at scale 1:500
- Design and Access Statement by Studio Charlotte Harris Ltd
- Planning Cover Letter by Studio Charlotte Harris Ltd
- Environmental Noise Survey by Hann Tucker Associates
- Plant Noise Assessment Report by Hann Tucker Associates
- Heritage Statement by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd
- Existing, removals and proposed drawings by Studio Charlotte Harris Ltd
- Proposed Security Layout Plans by Harley Haddow

**Background to application**

The original permissions for the main works associated with the GHI was granted on 3 July 2023 (ref: 2023/1044/LBC). Details of the replacement condenser unit and the security system were not included in the original application as they were subject to further considerations and recommendations from the MEP and security consultant. The details have now been finalized and Planning and Listed Building Consent is now sought for the works.

**Proposals**

The following lists the proposed alterations and the justification for works:

1. A replacement condenser unit within the basement level lightwell. The GHI requires the replacement and upgrade of this existing condenser unit to a more energy efficient unit, in order to service a group of four replacement fan coil units located in the first floor conference room (as per consent ref: 2023/1044/LBC).
2. The replacement and addition of CCTV cameras to both internal and external areas of the building. An improved and robust security system is essential to enable the GHI to continue operating as a library and institute open to the public. These proposals are required to ensure the security and safety of the building, its library collection, and the staff, academics, and members of public that work, study or visit there.
3. The addition of an intercom video entry panel to the principal entrance. A new video intercom panel is required at street level at the Bloomsbury Square entrance to provide direct contact with the reception from the pavement. This is an accessibility measure with the aim to improve the experience and accessibility for wheelchair users.

**Areas affected**

The existing condenser unit is situated in a discreet location, within the lightwell facing Bloomsbury Square. It is partially obscured by the lightwell stairs, limiting its visibility from the street. The proposed works would utilise the existing location and existing mechanical routes for the replacement. The proposed CCTV security system scheme affects both internal and external areas of the building. See the Proposed Security Layout Plans by Harley Haddow for locations of all CCTV. Regarding the exterior, three CCTV cameras are proposed for the GHI elevations. Each is positioned to be discreet whilst capturing specific views to the exterior of the building. The proposed intercom system panel would be situated mounted on the railings beside the main entrance on Bloomsbury Square.

**Methodology**

The Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture identifies that some of the proposed works will be located in significant areas of the Grade II Listed Building. For this reason, the GHI has carefully considered the positions of the proposed items to ensure the works will have the least impact on the historic fabric and the appearance of the building. Proposed items are positioned to achieve operational requirements whilst being visually discrete to minimise the physical impact on historic fabric. An initial review of the the current systems was undertaken by Harley Haddow,

(MEP/security consultant). As part of the proposals, the position of each fitting was interrogated in order to reduce its impact. Where possible, fittings were omitted altogether. Where this was not possible, locations were chosen to be both as discrete as possible or/and to be positioned on less significant fabric. Where feasible, existing wire ways or pipe routes are to be reused to avoid the need for core holes through historic fabric. Where feasible, fixings and other works are to be reversible.

**Conclusion**

Collectively, the proposals aim to enhance the usability, security and accessibility of the building. The replaced condenser unit will improve the energy efficiency of the building whilst benefiting users of the public space. The proposed CCTV system is the minimum required to ensure the security and safety of staff, researchers and public, as well as the institute's valuable library. The street level intercom system will improve accessibility and inclusivity of the building.

The proposals are sympathetic to the heritage significance and will help to secure the building's long-term viable use as a public building. The new condenser unit is considered to have a minor adverse affect on the building, however, this impact would be offset by the positive effects of the addition, particularly in enhancing the experience of building users and improving the control of internal conditions for the GHI's public spaces and collections.

The proposals align with the relevant parts of the NPPF, regional and local policy. The proposals are required to enhance user experience of the public building, however they are designed to remain discreet and sympathetic to the architecture of the Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The heritage impact assessment concludes that, given the discreet design, scale, and location of the proposals, the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area would be preserved, as would the special interest of the listed building.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [ch@studiocharlotteharris.com](mailto:ch@studiocharlotteharris.com)

Yours faithfully,

Charlotte Harris  
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