



THE BRITISH MUSEUM
DOOR SECURITYPROJECT

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCORPORATING HERITAGE STATEMENT
DECEMBER 2024 REV_ ***P04***

669-DJA-RP-A-10001_P04

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Executive Summary

This design and access statement incorporating heritage statement has been prepared by Dannatt, Johnson Architects on behalf of the British Museum to support an application for Listed Building consent for security improvement measures within the museum.

The British Museum is seeking to undertake minor works to improve security in three locations across the grade I listed site. The works proposed involve upgrading of three doors to provide auditability of access and ensure that solo access is not possible by providing an additional door in these locations with suitable locks and controls.

The application will be submitted by the Planning Lab, with Dannatt Johnson Architects acting as the British Museum's agents for architecture and historic building conservation. Proposals have been prepared by Dannatt, Johnson Architects and AECOM.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP), produced by Purcell Architects, Issue 01, February 2023, has been used a primary source of reference in preparing this statement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The British Museum was founded in 1753, and is located in the Grade I listed building in Bloomsbury, London. The Museum holds one of the world's greatest anthropology collections of human history, culture, and art with approximately 8 million objects in the permanent collection. The Museum is the United Kingdom's most visited cultural attraction with circa 6 million visitors per year.

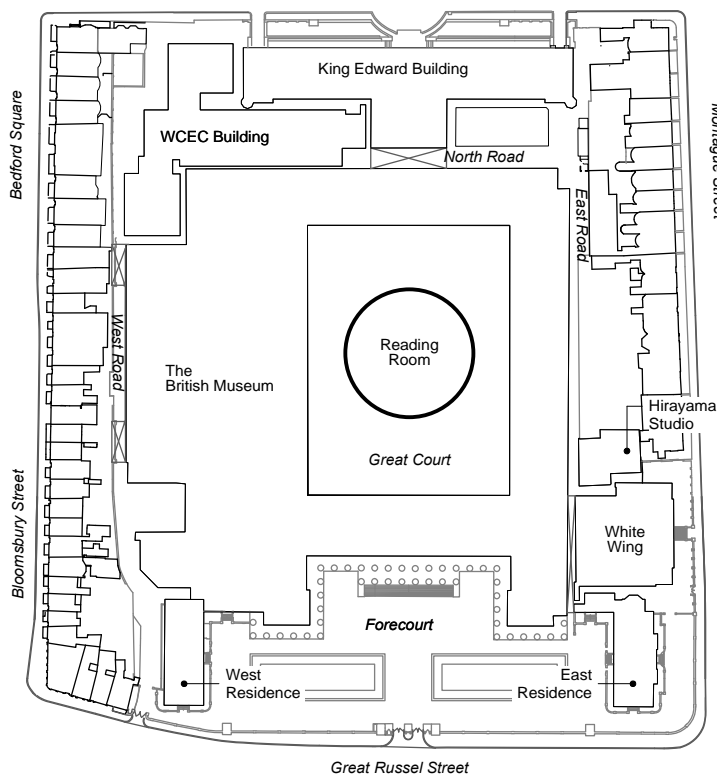
The 100,000 square meter site in Bloomsbury houses the Museum's key activities of curating, displaying and caring for the collection, work spanning many different periods over 250 years. The Museum is constantly adapting, and since its inception building work in the form of alterations, extension, reordering the collection, repairs, have been undertaken on an almost continuous basis.

As part of an ongoing program of security improvements to protect the collection there is an identified need to increase security to three existing doors.

The requirement is twofold, to provide auditability of access i.e. time and date of entry and also to ensure that solo access is not possible.

To do this an extension of the Museum's existing access control system will be used, however, this cannot be fitted to the existing plate steel doors in these locations. The intention is to fit "cover" timber doors which can be fitted with suitable locks and controls.

The works affect three doors within the British Museum (BM). Two are located in the East Wing at Level 1 (the Basement), and one is at level 0 on the King Edward VII Building (KEB), to the north of the Museum.



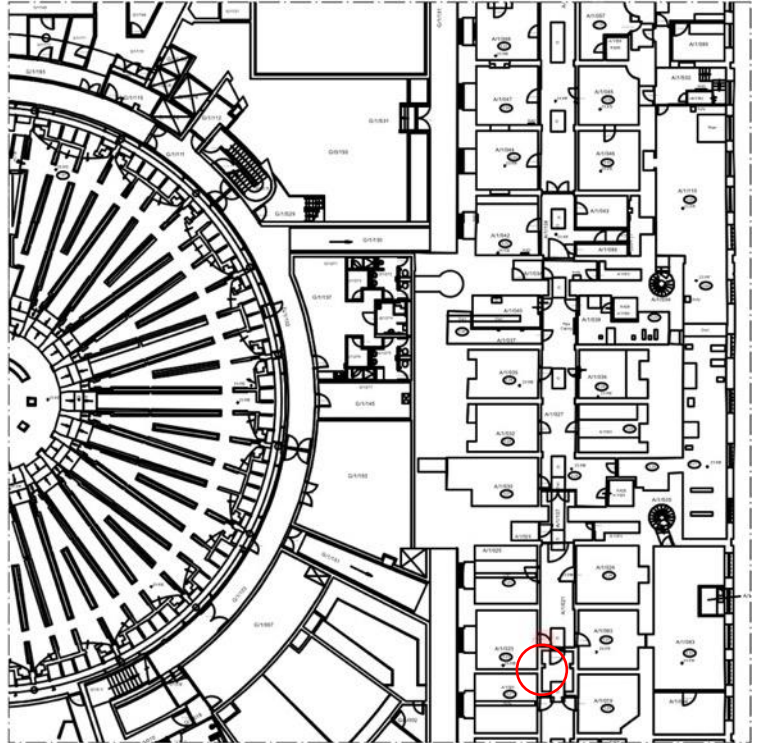
Please refer to Location Plans drawing number 669-DJA-DR-A-10001 and 669-DJA-DR-A-10002 showing the location of the works in relation to the wider BM site.

2. DOOR WORKS

2.1 DOORS A/1/023/D663 AND A/1/046/D693 IN THE EAST WING

2.1.1. EXISTING DESIGN

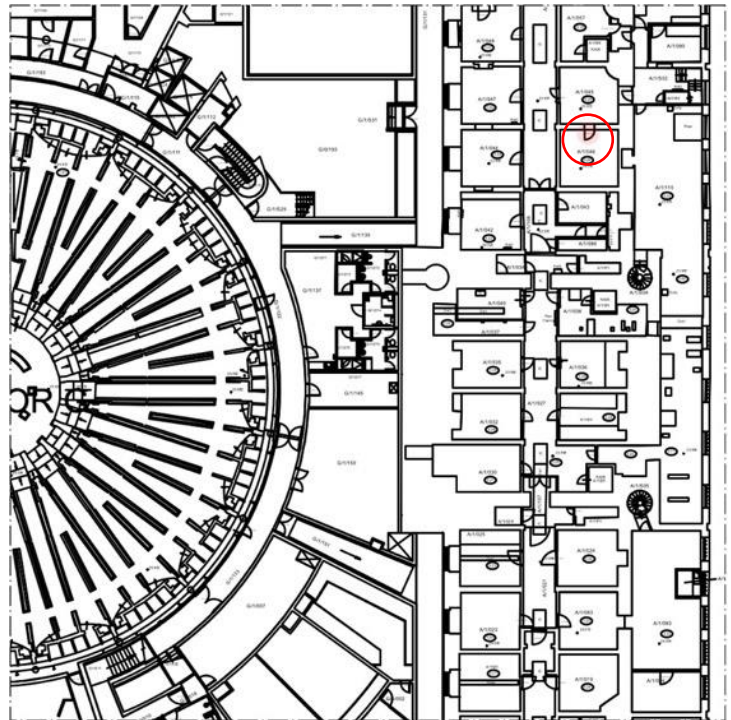
2.1.1.1 DOOR A/1/023/D663



Door A/1/023/D663

Door A/1/023/D663 is an existing steel door located on Level 1 of the East Wing along the corridor spanning from north to south called the East Road.

2.1.1.2 DOOR A/1/023/D693



Door A/1/046/D693

Door A/1/046/D693 is an existing steel door located on Level 1 of the East Wing between the vaulted room A/1/045 and room A/1/046.

2.1.2 History of the East Wing

The Conservation Management Plan, Issue 01 February 2023, prepared by Purcell notes the History of the East Wing basement, from its initial phase:

1.1 SIR ROBERT SMIRKE'S ORIGINAL FORM, 1823

The first stage of the Museum building to be completed to the design of Sir Robert Smirke was the East Wing. Access was from the north and south ends only.

The basement under the King's Library was built as a series of transverse barrel-vaulted brick structures orientated east/west with solid brick supporting crosswalls. These areas were mainly used for coal storage, with a central space containing stoves. A longitudinal passageway now known as the East Corridor ran north/south the entire length of the building and all the vaulted areas to each side opened onto the corridor. Handmade London clay stock brickwork is common throughout this basement.

In particular for the South Section that includes door A/1/023/D663, the CMP 2023 mentions:

South Section: *The south section is comprised of seven transverse vaults. There were circular high-level openings in the east and west end walls of each vault. The west wall was otherwise solid with no lower openings, as it retained the ground level of the quadrangle. These circular openings do not appear on the 1823 west elevation and may have been behind a screen wall.*

And for the North section, that includes door A/1/046/D693, the CMP 2023 quotes:

North section: *The basic original form of the original north section structure was a mirror image of the south section with seven transverse vaults. To the north, under the east stairs structure [...] there was no cross thoroughfare.*

Furthermore, the CMP 2023 notes the following relevant historical period for the East Wing:

1.2 SEGREGATION OF THE VAULTS, 1850-1941

The basement vaults were appropriated for various uses during this period as the heating and ventilation systems have evolved and uses of adjacent spaces have changed.

In particular, for the south section where door A/1/023/D663 is located:

South Section: *Following the completion of the quadrangle and formation of the sunken area along the west side of the East Wing, the vaulted areas on the west side of the East Wing basement began to be partitioned from the central corridor and splayed square windows were formed in the west wall at a lower level than the original circular openings.*

The coal storage requirement must have reduced at this time. It was either moved to another location or the form of heating to the air ducts changed. Radiators were installed in the previous stove area ... and were presumably fed from a boiler elsewhere. The piecemeal segregation of the vaults continued up to the Second World War.

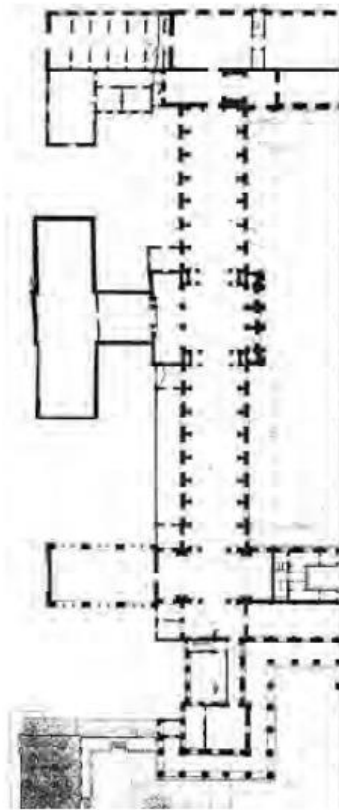


Fig. 1

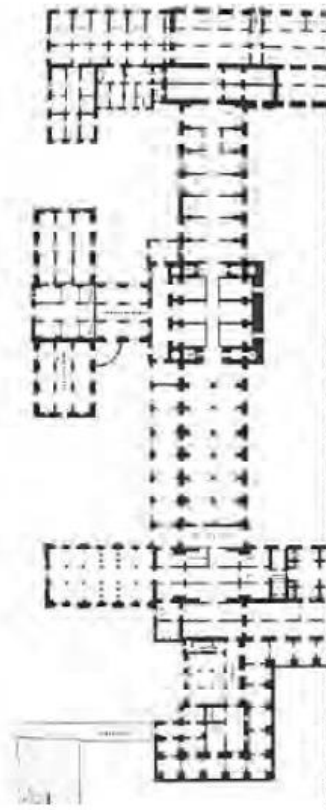


Fig. 2

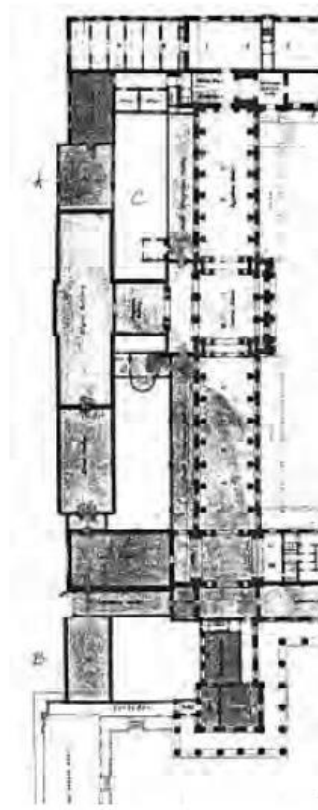


Fig. 3

Fig.1 The East Wing, as proposed 1827, Level 1 (BM Plans 56), Fig. 2 The East Wing, as proposed, 1827, Level 2 (BM Plans 57) The East Wing, as proposed, 1827, Level 6 (BM PLANS 55)

Whereas, for the section where door A/1/023/D663 is located, the CMP 2023 denotes:

North Section: [...] The north-east corridor (north east-west transverse, A/1/109) was presumably created following the addition of the Long Room in 1846-50. Most of the vaults on the west side of the north section were made into workshops in 1868, with a partition with a door and borrowed side lights formed onto the corridor and a splayed square window opening onto the quadrangle although these were altered later. Store rooms were formed on the east side and a thoroughfare created across the north end. Only minor alterations have occurred subsequently.

Finally, the CMP notes the latest historical transformation of the East Wing for the South Section:

1.3 SECOND WORLD WAR AIR RAID SHELTER, C.1939

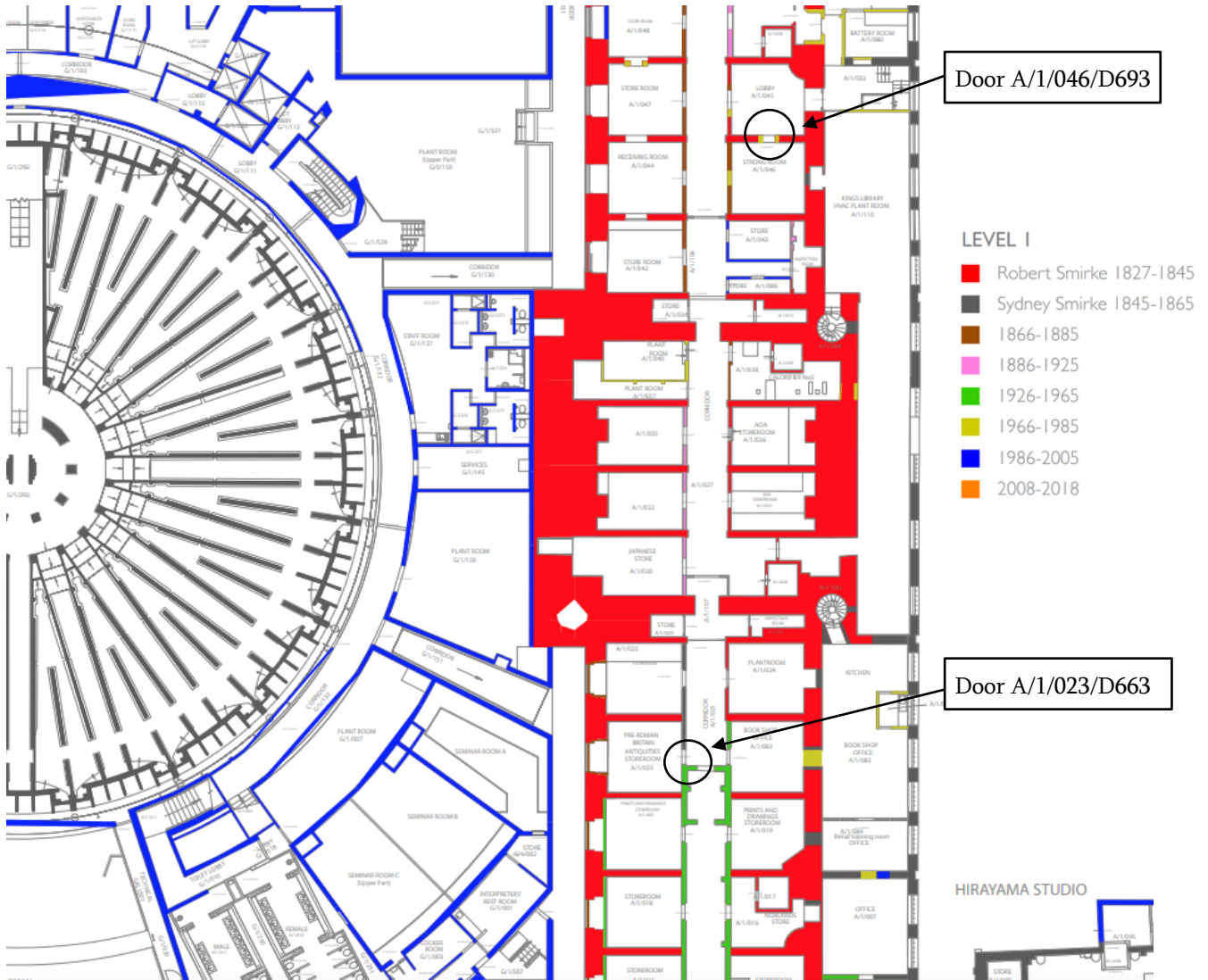
South Section: The majority of the south section of the basement was reinforced immediately prior to the Second World War to provide a safe refuge for artefacts in the event of an emergency. This involved constructing solid brickwork walls to separate vaults and forming air locks with doors fitted with leather and rubber gas seals, reinforcing the vaults with complex timber structures and providing a protected means of escape corridor to the East Road. [...]

The CMP 2023 then provides historical plans that help understanding the construction phases over the years.

An extract of Level 1 of the East Wing below shows to the north that Door A/1/046/D693 is between

two yellow hatches so that the door was opened between 1966 and 1985 in a wall that is was originally constructed during the Robert Smirke's masterplan.

Whereas, Door A/1/023/D663 was probably built when the wall marked in grey was erected in the decade 1845-1865 under Sydney Smirke's masterplan.



2.1.3 Significance

The Conservation Management Plan 2023 notes the cultural and heritage values specific of the East Wing basement:

SIGNIFICANCE

The integrity of the original configuration of vaults off a central corridor is very highly significant as this dates to the first phase of construction at the Museum and contains important built fabric.

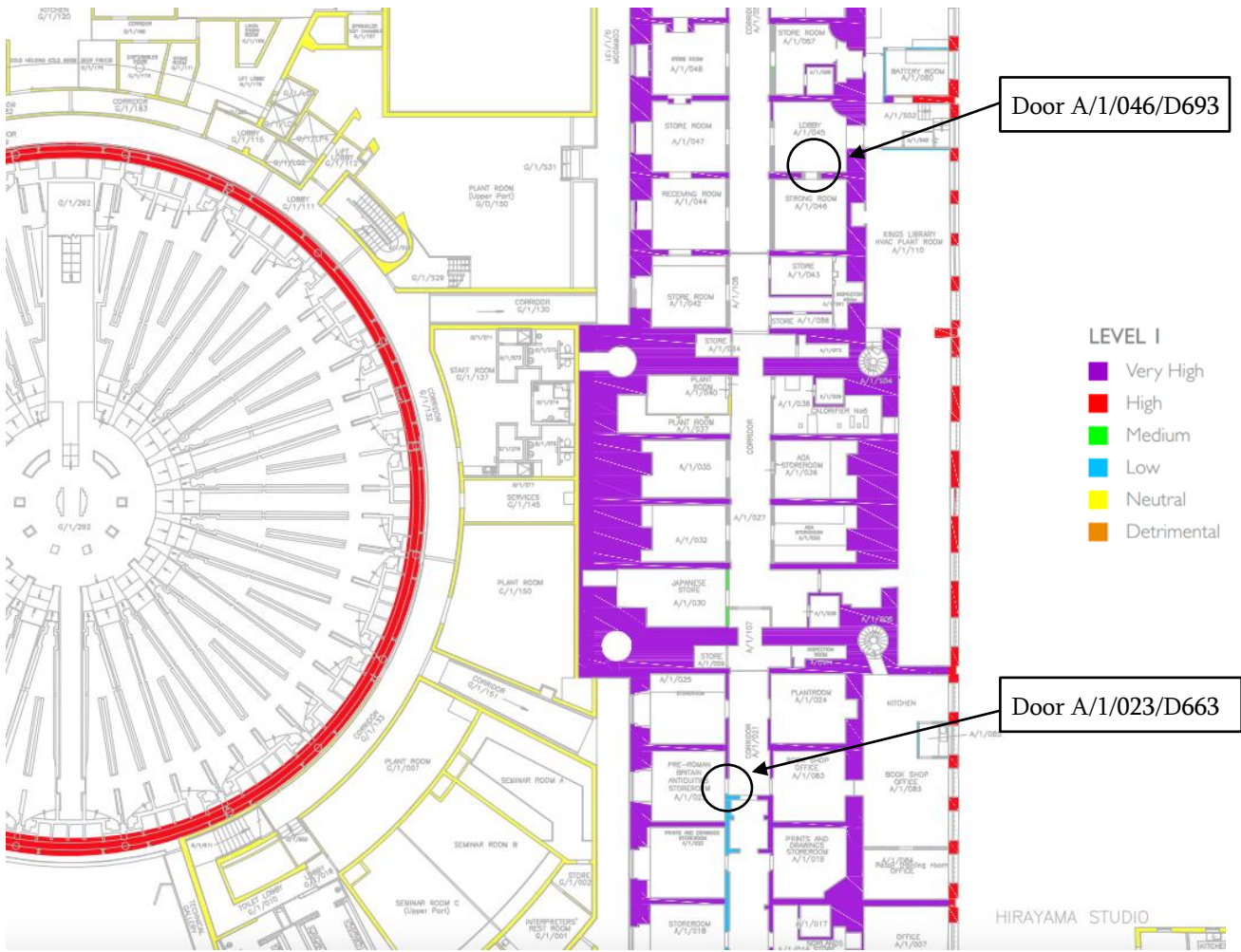
Later partitions and openings created after the removal of the original stoves in the central section are comparatively less significant. There is reasonably high potential for investigative works and services strip-out to uncover further evidence of Smirke's original heating system.

The integrity of the cellular layout survives better in the south section than in the north section. The air raid structures in the south section have some significance (low) for their association with the wider historical period and how the collection was protected at that time.

An extract of the Significance Plan level 1 prepared by Purcell is attached below, locating both doors of the East Wing basement.

In the north of the plan, Door A/1/046/D693 is located in a neutral opening in a Very High significance classified wall.

In the south of the plan, Door A/1/023/D663 is located at the junction between a Very High significance wall and a Low one.



2.1.4 Capacity for Change

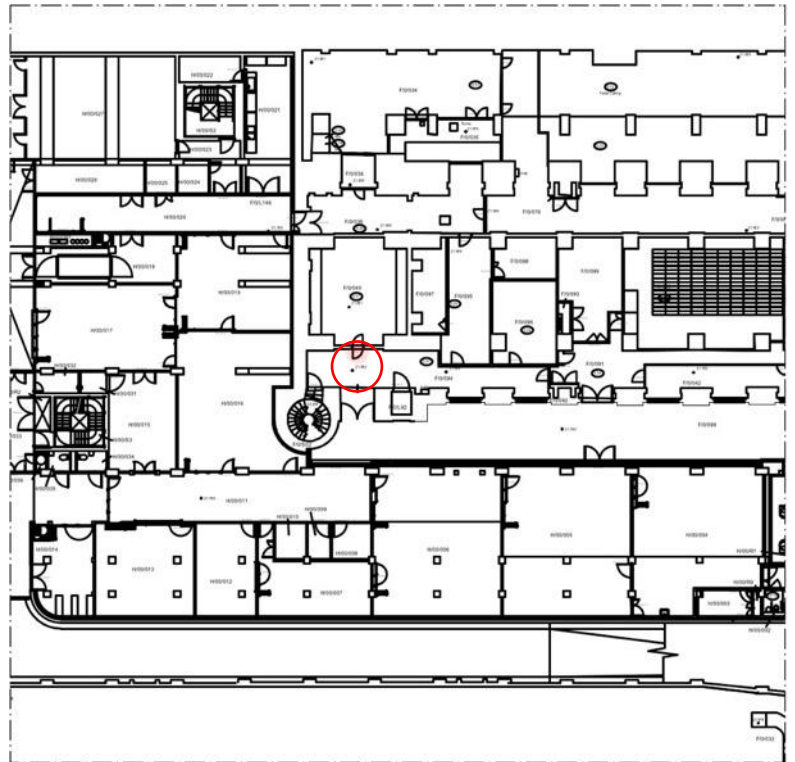
The Conservation Management Plan 2023 contains the following conservation guidance for ongoing works in the East Wing basement:

- *The north section of the east corridor basement has comparatively increased capacity for change than the south section as a result of the more intensive change that has been undertaken.*
- *The original brickwork structure, floor level and early blocked openings should be retained and conserved.*
- *Redundant items should be stripped before new services are installed. There should be a presumption that mechanical services are designed to fit within the existing structure, not that the structure is altered to accommodate the plant or service routes.*
- *There is reasonable scope to remove non-original partitions and doors, subject to the proposed design.*

We are committed to preserving the original brickwork structure, floor level, and blocked openings of the building. The proposed modifications will be reversible and will not entail the removal of any existing doors. As described in detail section 2.4, the proposed works to doors A/1/046/D693 and A/1/023/D663 will preserve the original brickwork and retain the existing door openings with no alterations to the existing structure, thus in line with the CMP guidance above.

2.2 DOOR F/0/094/D150 IN KEB

2.2.1. EXISTING DESIGN



Door F/0/094/D150

Door F/0/094/D150 is an existing steel door located on Level 0 of the King Edward Building along the corridor F/0/094 near the east turret staircase.

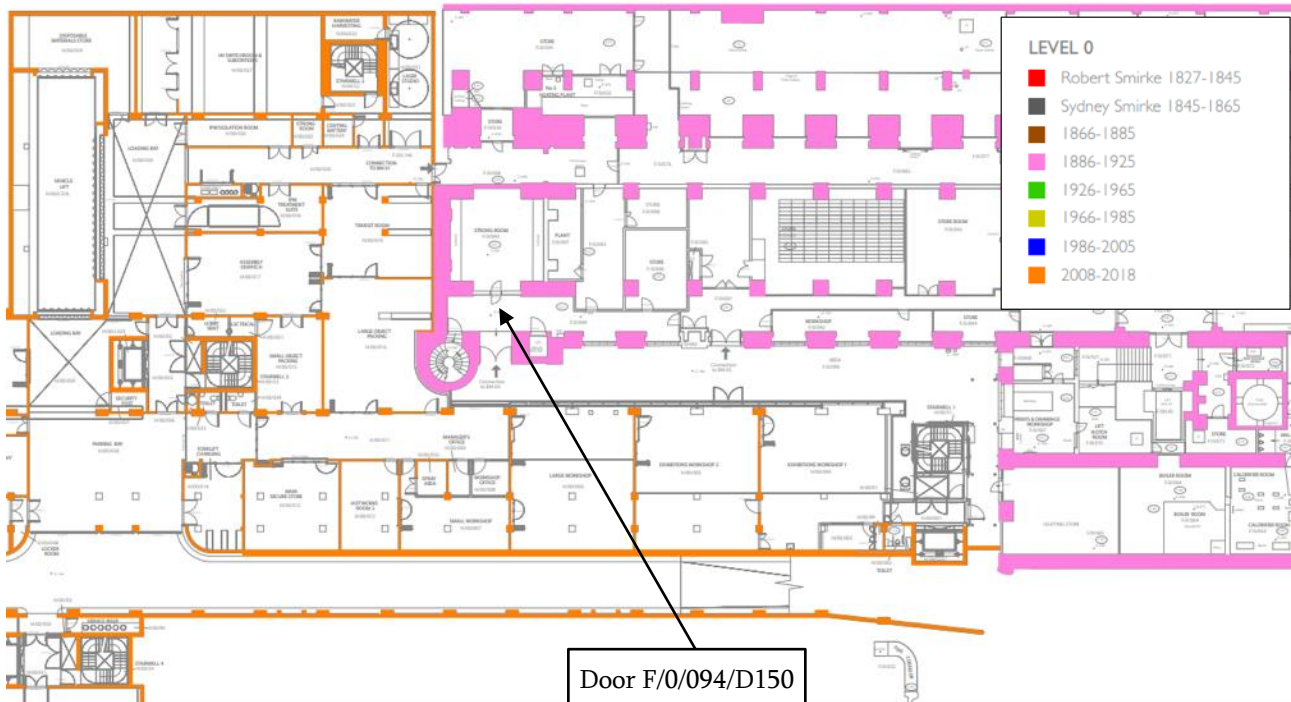
2.2.2 History of King Edward VII Building

The Conservation Management Plan, Issue 01, February 2023, prepared by Purcell notes that History of the King Edward VII Building (KEB) level 0:

These rooms principally contained the stores of the Maps, Egyptian and Oriental Antiquities departments until substantial remodelling in the 2000s.

The plans of 1925 show no subdivision of the basement, other than a partition running north to south at the east end (presumably between F/0/050/ F/0/051 and F/0/059). The stores were built in two phases; the part beneath the King Edward VII building (spaces forming F/0/040/F/0/094 in the west to E/0/050/F/0/060 in the east) was built in 1906-08 together with the excavation of the foot print of F/0/081 (and rooms on the same line to the east and west), followed by the construction of the battered brick retaining walls 14ms north. The roof over this part was not put up until 1912-14. Access to the stores was by the stair towers and personnel lifts to the east and west ends of the south elevation connecting with the floors above and by the North Stair to Level 2 largely as the existing arrangement. The external doors into the southern basement area behind the two personnel lifts also existed originally. The plans of 1925 describe the room as full of newspapers.

An extract of the Historical Development Plan Level 0 produced by Purcell shows that the area where door F/0/094/D150 is located in an area constructed between 1886 and 1925.

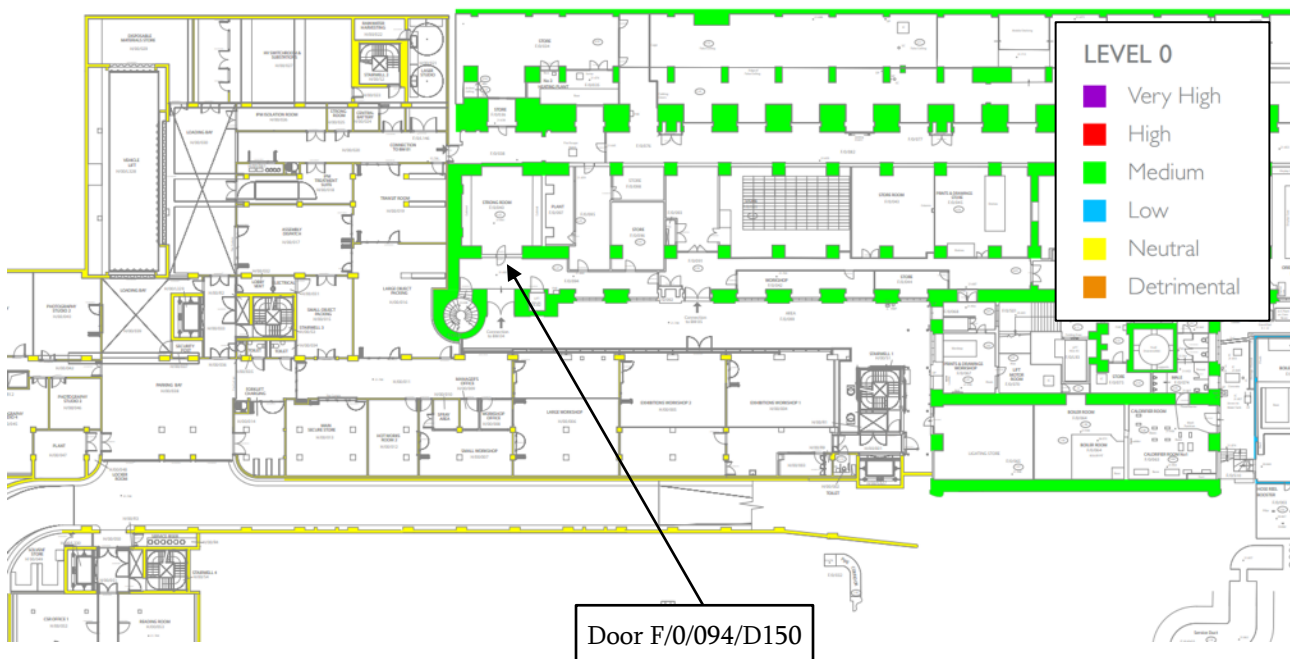


2.3.3 Significance

The Conservation Management Plan 2023 notes the cultural and heritage values specific of Level 0 of the KEB:

The built fabric of the KEB is moderately significant for its age and general integrity. However, the basement spaces are functional and basic compared to the upper floors.

Consequently, the significance plan produced by Purcell for the CMP 2023 shows in the extract below that door F/0/094/D150 is located in an area classified as Low significance.



2.3.4 Capacity for Change

The Conservation Management Plan 2023 prepared by Purcell gives the following guidance for proposed works in Level 0 of the KEB

- *Redundant items should be stripped before new services are installed. There should be a presumption that mechanical services are designed to fit within the existing structure, not that the structure is altered to accommodate the plant or service routes.*
- *Historic features and finishes should be retained or replaced on a like-for-like basis. There may be scope to specify alternatives where the original has been found unfit for purpose.*
- *There is scope to remove modern partitioning.*

We are committed to retaining historic features and finishes. The proposed modifications will be reversible and will not entail the removal of any existing doors. As described in detail in section 2.4, the proposed works to door F/0/094/D150 are aligned with the guidance above. Changes are reversible and the historic features of KEB are retained.

2.3 SECURITY

2.3.1 History of Security

The CMP 2023, Section 3 of the Gazetteer, prepared by Purcell, traces a history of security measurements of the Museum concerning doors:

Security has been a preoccupation of the Museum since the earliest days. In 1780 at the time of the Gordon Riots soldiers of the York Regiment were encamped in the garden of Montagu House to provide protection for the Museum from the mob. [...] the basement corridors were closed off at strategic points by wrought iron gates, [...] Many basement rooms have been used for the storage of Museum artifacts, and some early doors have subsequently been protected with steel sheet.

New high security locks have been introduced to all doors to give greater levels of protection and to provide a more refined control of authorised key-holders.

[...] Swipe-card and press-button coded access mechanisms are also used, largely for departmental use.

2.3.2 Significance

The Conservation Management Plan 2023 notes the cultural and heritage values specific of the security strategy of the Museum:

The methods of providing security to the Museum have changed over the years from the use of heavy doors, bars and warder staff to a greater dependence on electronic protection and sophisticated locking mechanisms. Generally, the earlier security provisions are designed as integral parts of the Museum fabric and are of medium to high significance. The main conservation concern is the visual intrusion of the more modern hardware which are detrimental to the significance of the sensitive historic interiors.

2.3.3 Capacity for Change

The Conservation Management Plan 2023 contains the following conservation guidance for ongoing works to enhance security.

- *Where early security measures survive, these should be retained as far as is practical.*
- *Modern security updates should be planned to be visually and physically sensitive to historic fabric and should be planned in a co-ordinated, rather than ad-hoc, manner.*

We are committed to retain any surviving early security measures. The modern security updates have been planned to be visually and physically coordinated and sensitive to historic fabric. The proposed works are in alignment with the above guidance. The installation of new timber doors in the back-of-house basements, as previously analysed in this document, will not visually or physically intrude upon the historic fabric of the site. Furthermore, these works are part of a comprehensive plan to enhance the security of the collection.

2.4 PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORKS

2.4.1 Proposed Scope of Work

It is proposed to install new joinery door frames around the existing steel doors to allow for new heavy-duty flush doors to be fitted on the corridor side of the existing doors.

The timber frame will be securely attached to the face of the masonry wall using steel brackets concealed from view in the finished work. As far as practicable, the fixings will be located in the mortar joints. Minimal additional penetration to the fabric will be carried out to accommodate the cabling required for the door access control device.

The doors and their frames will be reversible installations capable of being removed in the future with minimal making good required to existing fabric (i.e. filing to fixing and cable holes only).

We do not consider that any of these proposed works constitute visual intrusion of modern hardware into sensitive historic interiors.

Please refer to Dannatt, Johnson Architects Drawings (669-DJA-DR-A-70002 to 70004 and 71002 to 71004) for additional details.

2.4.2 Accessibility Statement

The nature of the works proposed will not have any impact on the accessibility of doors A/1/046/D693, A/1/023/D663 and F/0/094/D150.

3. SECURITY SERVICES INSTALLATION

3.1 Overview of Proposals

In order to enhance the security of the collection, the Museum is proposing to implement auditability of access to some spaces. This means that the time and date of entry will be recorded so that other management measures can be put in place.

A security advisor has been involved in developing the technical proposals.

The security devices and cabling will be mounted onto the proposed new door assemblies, hence will not be attached to historic fabric. The forming of chases is not required and the proposals would be reversible by removing the new doors.

4. CONSERVATION APPROACH

All work commissioned by the Museum are subject to a process of consultation with the Local Authority and Historic England, via discussion at regular dedicated quarterly meetings, followed up by detailed email correspondence. Once the proposals have been discussed in detail, they are then either covered by a detailed exchange of letters or a formal listed building application is made.

The proposed works in this application are necessary to improve the security of collections and therefore the reputation of the Museum. The actual physical work required is minor in scope and although works of this type are utilitarian by nature, these proposals have been developed with respect to the Grade I designation of the building.

We have made an evaluation of the impact of the proposal referring to the Criteria for assessment defined in the CMP 2023, section 3.4. The following grades are used to define whether the proposal will harm or benefit the heritage asset.

<i>1</i>	<i>High Beneficial</i>	<i>The proposed change considerably enhances the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	<i>In the majority of instances, proposal with this degree of impact will be considered as 'less substantial harm'</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Medium Beneficial</i>	<i>The proposed change enhances to a clearly discernible extent the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	
<i>3</i>	<i>Low Beneficial</i>	<i>The proposed change enhances to a minor extent the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	
<i>4</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>The proposed change does not affect the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	
<i>5</i>	<i>Low Adverse</i>	<i>The proposed change harms to a minor extent the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	
<i>6</i>	<i>Medium Adverse</i>	<i>The proposals harm to a clearly discernible extent the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance</i>	<i>Proposal where there are numerous elements with a medium adverse impact could be considered as 'substantial harm'</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>High Adverse</i>		<i>Proposals with one or more elements identified as having a highly adverse impact are likely to be considered as 'substantial harm'</i>

5. SUMMARY LEVEL OF HERITAGE IMPACT

	Overall Impact	Form	Function	Fabric
Alterations to Doors	4	4	4	4
Security Services Installation	4	4	4	4

6. HERITAGE IMPACT CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we believe that the proposed interventions described in this application will *‘not affect the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate its significance’*.

The proposal to fit secondary doors has been adopted after assessing the impact of altering the existing steel plate bespoke-made doors to accommodate the required new access control hardware. Modification of the existing steel doors is likely to be extremely difficult, even if technically viable, and is likely to result in a requirement to take these doors off site to the workshop of a specialist manufacturer. This would require the installation of temporary doors in the openings whilst these existing doors were being modified, resulting in additional and abortive work, additional costs and additional temporary security risks.

Overall, the works are needed to protect the collection and reputation of the Museum and will have a neutral impact on the overall significance of the museum.

7. SUMMARY

The Museum wishes to undertake security works as a part of a wider programme to protect the Museum collections. These works are essential to improve the existing level of security. Care has been taken to ensure the proposals involve minimal alteration to existing fabric and have a neutral impact on the special architectural interest and historic fabric of the building.

8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Dannatt, Johnson Architects Drawings:

669-DJA-DR-A-01001 Showing the site boundary

669-DJA-DR-A-10001 Showing the location of the proposed work at Level 1

669-DJA-DR-A-10002 Showing the location of the proposed work at Level 0

669-DJA-DR-A-70002 Showing Existing Door F/0/094/D150

669-DJA-DR-A-70003 Showing Existing Door A/1/023/D663

669-DJA-DR-A-70004 Showing Existing Door A/1/046/D693

669-DJA-DR-A-71002 Showing Proposed Door F/0/094/D150

669-DJA-DR-A-71003 Showing Proposed Door A/1/023/D663

669-DJA-DR-A-71004 Showing Proposed Door A/1/046/D693

APPENDIX B – Historic England Listing Information

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, Non Civil Parish - 1130404 _ Historic England

THE BRITISH MUSEUM KING EDWARD VII GALLERIES AND ATTACHED WALL AND LIONS,
Non Civil Parish - 1322129 _ Historic England