

Application ref: 2025/0038/P
Contact: Elaine Quigley
Tel: 020 7974 5101
Email: Elaine.Quigley@camden.gov.uk
Date: 3 March 2025

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

Phone: 020 7974 4444

planning@camden.gov.uk
www.camden.gov.uk/planning

The Planning Lab
Somerset House
South Wing
London
WC2R 1LA

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:

The British Museum
Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3DG

Proposal:

Continued use of single storey structures in the south and north entrances to provide an external search facility to the museum for a temporary period for 18 months (until 3rd September 2026)

Drawing Nos: 683-DJA-DR-A-11001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-11002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-11003 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-10001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-21001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30003 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31003 rev P01; Covering letter prepared by the Planning Lab dated 06/01/2025; Heritage Statement prepared by Dannatt Johnson Architects dated December 2024; Design and Access Statement prepared by Dannatt Johnson Architects dated December 2024.

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The proposed single storey security structures in the south and north forecourt

hereby permitted are for a temporary period only and shall be removed from the site and the site made good by no more than 18 months until 3rd September 2026.

Reason: The type of structures are not such as the local planning authority is prepared to approve, other than for a limited period, in view of its appearance. The permanent retention of the structures would be contrary to the requirements of policy D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
683-DJA-DR-A-11001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-11002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-11003 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-10001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-21001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-30003 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31001 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31002 rev P01; 683-DJA-DR-A-31003 rev P01; Covering letter prepared by the Planning Lab dated 06/01/2025; Heritage Statement prepared by Dannatt Johnson Architects dated December 2024; Design and Access Statement prepared by Dannatt Johnson Architects dated December 2024.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

Informative(s):

- 1 Reasons for granting permission.

The purpose of the single storey structures within the south forecourt and at the rear on Montague Place are to provide security screening to visitors entering the museum as an additional security measure to the existing security screening within the main entrance of the Museum itself. The structures have been in place since August 2016. Retrospective planning permission was granted in 2020 for the structures for a temporary 2 year period and again in 2023 for another 2 years (ref 2022/3159/P). This permission expires on 03/03/2025. Listed building consent is not required for these works as the security structures are not attached to the listed building but are independent structures that require planning permission only.

The Museum are seeking temporary permission to retain the security structures for a further 18 months (September 2026) to allow progress on masterplan activity and to continue design, consultation process and construction of a longer term medium term interim proposal. The masterplan activity would look at security as a whole, as well as visitor flows and wayfinding within the museum itself.

Need:

The need for the security structures to be constructed outside the main Museum building are twofold: Firstly, to reduce the risk to the public, it was essential to relocate bag searching outside of the Museum building in order to try to reduce the potential for any terrorist threat entering the Museum building itself. It can therefore be dealt with away from the main building and the

majority of visitors and emergency services can access more easily. Secondly they provide operational management benefits including controlling visitor flows. The need for the structures is therefore accepted.

Design and heritage:

The Council acknowledges that the proposed security structures are prominent features within the direct foreground setting of the Museum. In terms of the main entrance, the symmetrical design of the Smirke Museum buildings, their arrangement around the Southern Forecourt and associated boundary treatments all work together to create the appearance of a grand palace composition that reinforces the status of the Museum as a Grade I listed building. The south forecourt is integral to the setting of the Museum and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. In terms of the Montague Place entrance, the northern entrance is integral to the character and appearance of the building and the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area. As such, it is considered that the security structures do cause a degree of harm to the setting of the building and the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The harm to the setting of the building is due to the position of the structures outside the Grade I listed building. The harm would be considered less than substantial to the designated heritage asset (i.e. the Grade I listed building) as it is not affecting the designated heritage asset itself rather the issue is the harm to its setting. The proposed structures are out of character in the conservation area due to their size, scale, bulk, footprint, form and appearance. However the harm is identified as less than substantial harm as the impact has to be considered in relation to the setting of the conservation area as a whole and the proposal affects only a small area of the Bloomsbury conservation area. The issues of harm have to be weighed against the public benefits that the proposal provides. Considerable importance and weight has been attached to the harm caused in this instance, nevertheless the security structures would continue to be in place for a temporary period of time until a medium term and permanent solution are identified through the future masterplan for the estate and the security screening improvements provided by the structure are considered a significant public benefit which would outweigh the less than substantial harm caused.

- 2 It is accepted that the approach taken is an appropriate temporary solution to address the existing security issues and that the works have been carefully conceived to cause the least harm to the listed building in line with the NPPF 2024. Historic England has no objection to the application to extend for a further 18 months.

As already stated above, this type of development is something that the Council would not normally support due to the impact of the proposal on the conservation area. Given the longer time period required to design and plan for a permanent solution as part of a future masterplan document the permission would be for a temporary period of 18 months. The structures would then be required to be removed and the area made good. This would be secured by condition.

Amenity:

There will be no impact on neighbour amenities.

No objections were received prior to making this decision. The planning history of the site has been taken into account when coming to this decision.

Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, and of preserving the listed building and its features of special architectural or historic interest, under s.66 and s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with policies A1, D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017. The proposed development also accords with policies of the London Plan 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Informative (1/2):

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("1990 Act") is that planning permission granted in England is subject to the condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The local planning authority (LPA) that would approve any Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) (if required) is London Borough of Camden.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are summarised below, but you should check the legislation yourself and ensure you meet the statutory requirements.

Based on the information provided, this will not require the approval of a BGP before development is begun because it is below the de minimis threshold (because it does not impact an onsite priority habitat AND impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat).

++ Summary of transitional arrangements and exemptions for biodiversity gain condition.

The following are provided for information and may not apply to this permission:

1. The planning application was made before 12 February 2024.
2. The planning permission is retrospective.
3. The planning permission was granted under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the original (parent) planning permission was made or granted before 12 February 2024.
4. The permission is exempt because of one or more of the reasons below:
 - It is not "major development" and the application was made or granted before 2 April 2024, or planning permission is granted under section 73 and the original (parent) permission was made or granted before 2 April 2024.
 - It is below the de minimis threshold (because it does not impact an onsite priority habitat AND impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat with biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat).
 - The application is a Householder Application.
 - It is for development of a "Biodiversity Gain Site".

- It is Self and Custom Build Development (for no more than 9 dwellings on a site no larger than 0.5 hectares and consists exclusively of dwellings which are Self-Build or Custom Housebuilding).
- It forms part of, or is ancillary to, the high-speed railway transport network (High Speed 2).

4. + Irreplaceable habitat:

If the onsite habitat includes Irreplaceable Habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements. In addition to information about minimising adverse impacts on the habitat, the BGP must include information on compensation for any impact on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The LPA can only approve a BGP if satisfied that the impact on the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

++ The effect of section 73(2D) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

If planning permission is granted under section 73, and a BGP was approved in relation to the previous planning permission ("the earlier BGP"), the earlier BGP may be regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition on this permission. It will be regarded as approved if the conditions attached (and so the permission granted) do not affect both the post-development value of the onsite habitat and any arrangements made to compensate irreplaceable habitat as specified in the earlier BGP.

++ Phased development:

In the case of phased development, the BGP will be required to be submitted to and approved by the LPA before development can begin (the overall plan), and before each phase of development can begin (phase plans). The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition in phased development are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The council publishes its adopted policies online, along with detailed Camden Planning Guidance. It also provides advice on the website for submitting applications and offers a pre-application advice service.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision>.

If you submit an appeal against this decision you are now eligible to use the new [submission form](#) (Before you start - Appeal a planning decision - GOV.UK).

Yours faithfully



Daniel Pope

Chief Planning Officer