Brunswick Centre

Design and Access Statement

Existing Building and Site layout

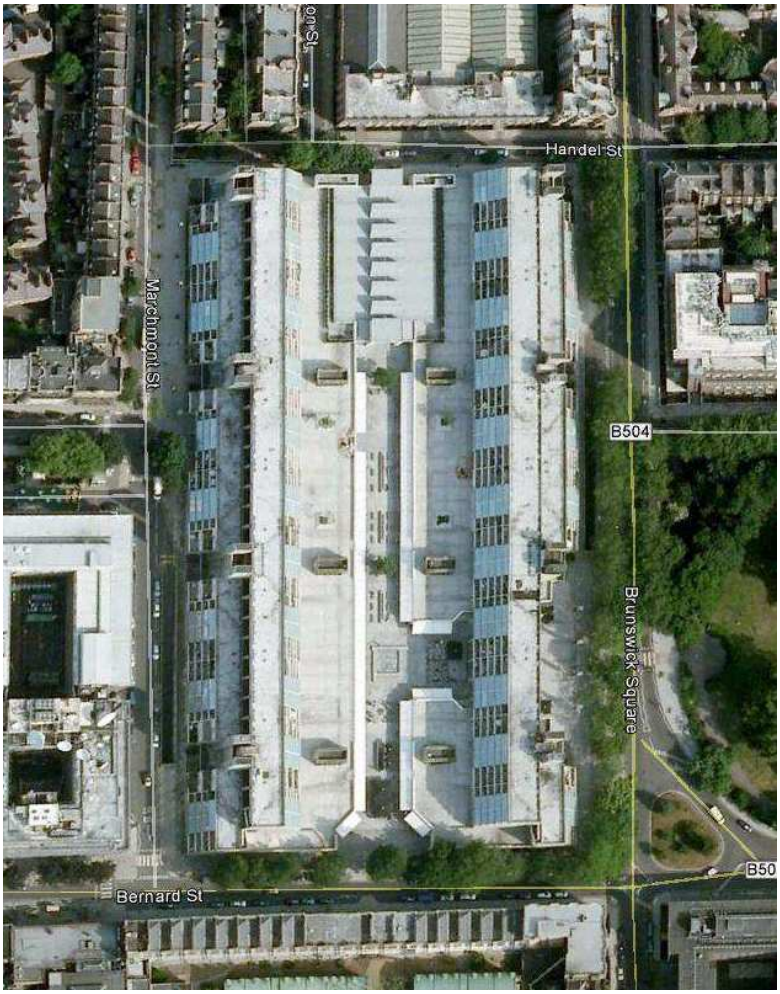

Image Copyright Google

The Brunswick Centre was designed by Patrick Hodgkinson in the mid-1960s and is based on spatial studies by Leslie Martin that showed that high rise development could be replaced by perimeter development. It was completed in 1972 and achieved Grade II status in 2000.

The complex contains 560 flats, shops, cafés and restaurants, a supermarket, and the Renoir Cinema. It completely fills the city block formed by Bernard Street, Marchmont Street, Handle Street and Hunter Street/Brunswick Square. There is a Highways footpath around the site.

The 'ground' level of the building is raised up above street level and is accessed via ramps and/or steps. This level is now referred to as the Piazza and sits above two levels of below ground car parking.

The Piazza provides the main horizontal access to the activities in the complex. Accommodation is provided on this level for a number of retail units as well as providing entry/exit points to the car parking levels and to the residential blocks above. The cinema entrance is also at this level.

Above the Piazza, the access controlled steps and lift give access to the Podium, an open space for the two residential 'perimeter' blocks of flats that line the two long sides of the complex. These residential blocks are in the form of extruded ziggurats with the central space being used as a 'street'. However most flats are accessed from the stair cores that rise from the public street level via the Podium.

Existing Appearance

The main building is formed in in-situ concrete cast with a fair faced finish with feature joints. There is a mixture of fenestration in metal frames.

There was a major refurbishment completed in 2006 that made a number of changes to the external appearance:

- The main structure was repaired and painted,
- the retail fronts were replaced in steel and glass with fabric canopies,
- the paving to the Piazza and Podium levels was replaced in granite.

Background to Proposal

In undertaking the refurbishment noted above, the water proofing membrane under the paving was replaced along with much of the surface water drainage. This has proved to be less effective than was anticipated and has lead to water backing up onto the paved surfaces and to a number of persistent leaks through the main concrete fabric and into the retail units and the car park. After several years of ineffective repair attempts a decision has been made to take up the paving and replace the water proof membrane in full.

Proposal

To resolve the existing water penetration it is proposed to carry out the phased replacement of the existing paving and water proofing over much of the Podium and Piazza. This will also require the careful removal, storage and replacement of the existing planting, benching and water features.

We are advised that as the existing granite paving is bedded on cement there are likely to be too many breakages to be able reuse it on this site due to the reduced quantity of material although much of it should be capable of being reclaimed and reused elsewhere. We have therefore selected a new granite slab but one which is as close a match as possible to the existing.

It is proposed to replace the current siphonic drainage with a gravity system similar to that originally installed.

Design Principles

Podium

The granite paved Podium provides 'open space' for the flats. After heavy or persistent rain fall this locally floods around the rainwater outlets. There is also an issue with the rainwater from the flat's balconies which discharges over the paving and has created a slip hazard. The existing small bore siphonic drainage passes through the retails units below.

The paving is laid to falls and has a perimeter granite skirting. The design intention is to repeat the look of this but to achieve this by using loose laid slabs on spacers with drainage channels at low points. This will allow the surface water to drop below the surface and run to the new out let positions. The granite skirting will be replaced.

To achieve a new gravity drainage system the pipe system has to be enlarged. The original drainage was cast into the concrete structure where as its replacement was installed through where the retail units are now located. We do not want to risk using the old pipework nor can we easily disrupt the retail units to replace the pipework that runs through them. We therefore propose to integrate the new drainage with the previous replacement shop front structures. We have carried out a study of how this might be achieved and to avoid disrupting the existing retail unit lighting and shop signs we have concluded that a simple pipe system colour coated to match the shop front structure, will be the least intrusive solution.

View of retail units as existing and

with proposed rain water pipes.

Piazza

The granite paved Piazza provides access to the retail units, car park and flats. After heavy or persistent rain fall this locally floods around the rainwater outlets.

The paving is laid to falls and tightly abuts the new shop fronts. The design intention is to repeat the look with solid bedded slabs with drainage channels at low points. This will allow the surface water to drop below the surface more readily. We are unable to repeat the loose laid solution at this level due to the requirement for occasional vehicular maintenance traffic.

Access – Temporary and Permanent

These proposals will not affect the existing access to the site or the building once they are complete, however in order to carry out these works it will be necessary to temporarily divert pedestrians around the site. The contractor will provide temporary surfaces to maintain access to the retail units and to some flats access. In particular access to the pedestrian lift giving access to the car parks, Piazza and Podium will be maintained at all times. This is described more fully in Phasing and Method Statement.

The permanent works are designed to maintain the current DDA standards.

Conclusion

The proposed works will protect the core fabric of the building for the foreseeable future, minimise health and safety risk from standing water without materially changing the visual appearance of the building.

Watkins Gray International LLP
Colechurch House,
1 London Bridge Walk,
London, WCI 2SX
020 7940 8400