arts lettres techniques ARCHITECT

English Folk Dance and Song Society

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Lift installation and associated works at Cecil Sharp House

November 2012

Fig.1 South East Elevation

Cecil Sharp House 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY

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1 Circumstances

1.1 Scope of the report

Arts Lettres Techniques (ALT) were engaged by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) in November 2011 to identify possible locations for a lift within Cecil Sharp House, in order to deliver appropriate levels of access for all, within what is a highly utilised public building. The current access situation is wholly inadequate, with only the ground floor accessible by a single external stair lift. EFDSS has an opportunity to address this through Legacy funding provided to improve accessibility as a matter of urgency. The lift installation is a therefore a high priority for the Society.

In reviewing potential locations, a subsidiary aim of this study is to ensure (as far as is feasible given that there are no specific redevelopment plans) that the location chosen for the lift provides the greatest possibilities for integration into future development ambitions for the building and the Society, whilst minimizing the impact on both the historic fabric and its setting within a Conservation Area. EFDSS will be fundraising and initiating a programme of capital works in due course, however the time frame for this remains uncertain and the need to improve accessibility is urgent.

English Folk Dance and Song Society can justifiably claim to be custodians of traditional English folk music, and the List Description of Cecil Sharp House recognises that the importance of the building relates directly to this custodianship (see Appendix 2). The particular geometry and organisation of the House effectively manifests the spaces required for traditional dance and music, giving specificity to the building that is both its strength and weakness.

The original envelope of the House essentially remains today, the gradual infilling of the un-serviced spaces of the 1930's with both technical elements and an ever-growing archive of increasingly precious artifacts means, however, that the simple clarity of the original building has been effectively lost. In addition the rebuilding of parts of the building following bomb damage in WWII has also resulted in the loss of some of the original details, planform, character and scale with the addition of the second storey. Cecil Sharp House sits within the boundaries of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

As the models of funding for organisations such as EFDSS change, the building itself becomes a primary means of sustaining the activity of the Society. The use of the House as rehearsal space and venue beyond its original remit creates a tension that now makes further physical alteration a necessity.

With changes both incremental and extensive comes the concomitant risk of inadvertent change to the character of the Society itself.

In this report, Section 1 refers to the scope of the EFDSS requirements in relation to the potential of the building to contain them, and the current brief that requires addressing – namely independent access for the public and staff to all floors of the House. Section 2 discusses the criteria used for evaluating a variety of locations for the lift access. Section 3 reviews each option systematically, beginning with the chosen option, allowing for comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of each on equal terms. The Study identifies five possible locations and looks at each in terms of accessibility, future use and Listed Building ramifications.

Section 4 summarizes the findings of the Study. Section 5 describes works associated with the provision of a new access point, addressing the long-term depreciation of the reception area and the external territory that provides the access to the building through a combination of conservation and enhancement. Section 6 summarises the reasoning for the current application.

Finally the Appendices record the listing description and pre-application advice on the feasibility study for six lift core locations, providing an opportunity for creative reflection that resulted in the identification of a place for the lift within the building that also minimized the necessary intervention to the existing fabric.

1.2 Need and justification – adapting to circumstance

Fig 2. Bomb damage to entrance 1940

The List Description (refer to Appendix 1) describes the external appearance of Cecil Sharp House in terms of style, material and detail. Internally the only elements given status are the Ivon Hitchens' mural and the wooden paneling that encompass the Hall. It is worth noting in the List Description that the "Front façade of 1 tall storey, 5 bays" confirms the view that the elevation presenting to the triangular garden and towards Parkway and the South East (see document cover) is the dominant face of the building, yet the entrance is to the North West on the other side. With the pastoral idea of the dance within the open air no longer achievable – due to noise levels from traffic, the garden and the "Front façade" form an important part of the re-evaluation of the internal arrangements of the building and by definition the placement of the lift.

The pastoral intention of the external space is the most visible of the ideas that the original brief sought to embody in the building. The dimensioning of the internal spaces to suit the geometry of dancing is well documented, but the disposition of practice and utility below, performance and formality above and 'office organisation' on the upper level created a distinct vertical hierarchy too. Over time this hierarchy has been eroded, with formal functions in the semi-basement, storage and practice on the first floor, and the library archives located in any available free space on all floors.

The dominant volume of the hall is key to the operation of the Society and the status of the Listed building. Despite having a Neo-Georgian dress code, the functional separation of the hall from the administration block places it historically within a period where stylistic and organisational ideologies were often at odds. This awkward reconciliation has had repercussions throughout the history of the building, having such a dominant and closed volume at the 'front of house' creates a problem of approach. The original and current entrance clearly feels like the tradesman's entrance, its Northerly orientation, presence of close neighbours and utilitarian driveway access adding to this impression.

Fig 3. Original Design as built in 1930.

The format of the North elevation is currently dominated by the impression of regular symmetry; however this was not the case in the original building. Reviewing photographs from 1931, the North block comprising library, stair, administration and WC/ancillary space, makes plain its differentiated roles – the West end (formal library) and the East end (service quarters) -through the fenestration. The Library has full height windows with Juliet balconies to the right of the entrance, whereas to the left a simple window with raised cill is provided to the WC/Changing room corridor. The East elevation has paired windows to the ground floor WC's (Fig.2) and offices (first floor), whereas the Library windows to the West elevation (Fig.3) are single, wider and more formal versions without the ancillary soil pipework or boiler chimney. The West elevation's twin circular windows are part of an original provision on the first floor not repeated on the East. These add to the formal quality of the façade design facing Regents Park Road, the less important Gloucester Avenue having the Eastern service elevation.

Fig.4 Original north elevation 1931showing Portland stone entrance within a smaller scale central elevation.

Fig.5 Eastern (service) elevation.

Fig.6 the formal Western (Library) elevation

The 50's re-construction has in places exacerbated this difference between 'high' and 'low' functional expression, and has also erased it at the same time: see drawing CSH108 for comparison. An air intake at high level to the eastern end of the North elevation and the addition of escape stairs and pipe-work from the basement reinforce the nature of the Eastern service side of the block, whereas the regularising of the fenestration during the rebuilding has instigated a symmetry that was not original (dropping the cill to the male WC passageway for example, giving a formal, full height window to an informal space for the sake of external priorities). Such detailed differences are as subtle as the shallow depth of the window reveals, and in particular refer explicitly to the early English domestic architecture cited in the CAAC advice – that of establishing clear and unapologetic use of services where required, within an ordered and somewhat austere whole.

The Library, as envisaged in the original concept remains intact today, yet it was designed to hold contemporary books of the time and of a much smaller volume than it currently contains. The original 1930 'contemporary' is now over eighty years old and in terms of both quantity and sensitivity (environmental and aesthetic), new archives are needed. At the same time as the artifacts become more delicate, the need to display them (ideally within an interactive study centre) becomes acute. The place of authentic history within 'interpretative' history is problematic, with Cecil Sharp House itself needing to be subject of physical change in order to present its own authenticity more clearly.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to address such wider issues, there remains, nevertheless, the immediate need to be able to provide public access to all floors of the building, with a longer-term requirement to re-house the important collections that Cecil Sharp House currently stores in appropriate and inaccessible accommodation on site.

Similarly the performance and rehearsal spaces, on the ground and lower ground floors primarily, but also in the Committee Room on the first floor, require easy public access for all. EFDSS also strongly wishes to be able to identify itself as an Equal Opportunities employer and this would entail the provision of lift access to the second floor meeting room and general offices. Finally it must be noted that whilst the addition of a stair lift to the main entrance steps has enabled access at least to the main performance level (including Kennedy Hall and the Library), the time and difficulty taken to use the equipment means that this provision is very limited and off-putting for potential visitors. The Access User Group that EFDSS has set up to enable formal discussions to take place about such issues comments that access to the building is currently not available to wheelchair users independently.

In the following section a review is undertaken of the criteria to be used for evaluating possible lift locations in Cecil Sharp House.

2 Criteria for evaluating the lift location

The following criteria are used to discuss the particular value of each location option, and have been identified as important aspects of the lift installation:

2.1 Navigation and routes

This section considers the strategic navigation of the building by users and staff, facilitated by the placement of the lift and its relation to spaces and activities that it connects to. The existing stair within the administration block is a significant element of the experience of the building, and the lift location has to deal with this from both an aesthetic and functional perspective. The priority of the stair over the lift is also considered, and how the visibility or otherwise of the lift impacts on the choices people make regarding means of ascent/descent.

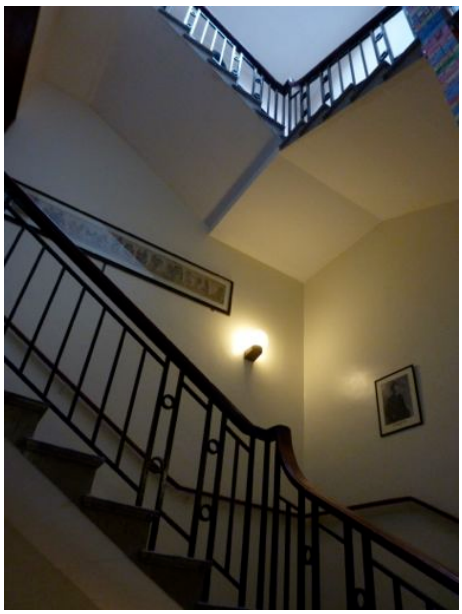


Fig 7. Existing staircase

2.2 Extent of works required

The location of the lift shaft impacts on the surrounding fabric of the building, and has a consequence for the spaces it adjoins. Each option creates some form of reverberation in terms of relocation or rescaling of activities. Such displacement of activities adds to both complexity and cost of the installation, and the short or long term nature of that impact is discussed in each case.

2.3 Historic fabric

The impact on the building of the various location options are discussed, but would need to be qualified with detailed examination of the historic fabric prior to any Listed Building application.

2.4 Cost impact

The statements on the cost implications of the lift options are not supported by surveyors estimates due to the limited timescale and scope of this review, however broad comparative conclusions are drawn, based on experience and limited discussion with the Project Lift Company and Stannah Lifts, both of whom have been involved with a previous, unrealised scheme for EDFSS as recently as 2010.

2.5 Visibility and security

The placement of the lift has implications for staffing in terms of the welcome visitors receive, and the levels of surveillance the Society requires for the sake of security.

2.6 Achieving 'Full access'

The achievability of full physical access does not necessarily deliver a perceived equality of access. The location of the lift is part of the entire entrance sequence, and the degree to which all users are integrated and not segregated is part of the consideration of how full access is achieved.

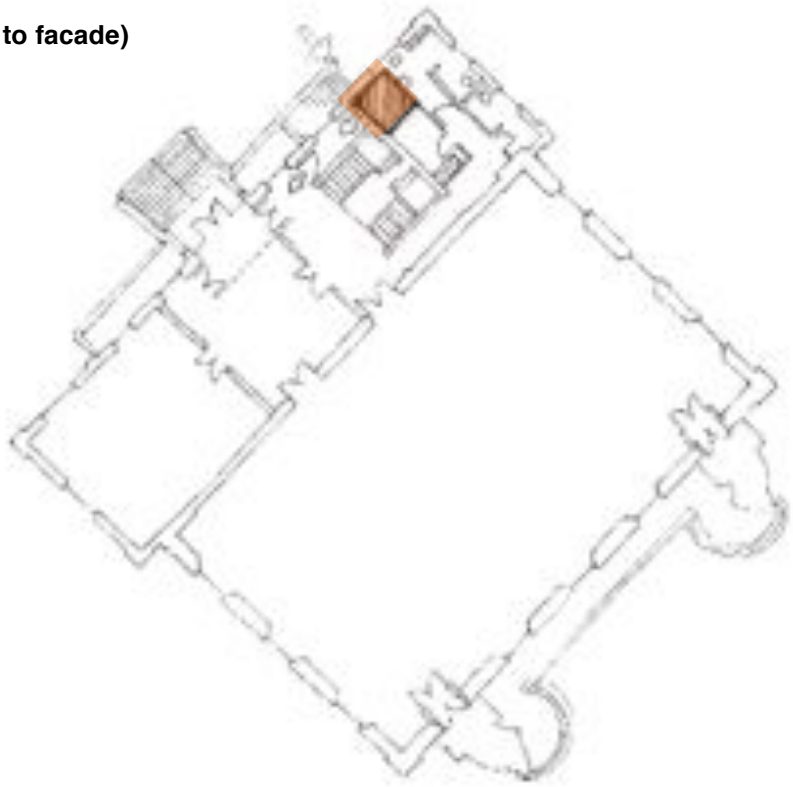
2.7 Fire strategy

The lift location does not enhance the escape strategy for the building, the reverse in fact, as ironically the potential presence of wheelchair users in the upper floors creates a risk situation that is currently not present, and makes demands that are currently not met. The lifts generally does not form part of the escape strategy for a public building, however the potential for disabled refuges above ground floor, and the way in which the lift shaft affects current and future spatial arrangements is discussed in this section.

The London Fire Authority's remit has changed from an advisory role to one of enforcement thereby unfortunately preventing 'pre-application' discussion. The chosen lift proposal has been described in detail **prior** to submitting the listed building application and reviewed by an Approved Inspector, however subsequent negotiations relating to heritage issues with conservation professionals may require further review by the LFA.

3 Lift location options: diagrams

Selected option: stair core (adjacent to facade)



Navigation and routes

As for option three, the lift and stair maintain the circulation pattern currently in place. The location of the lift adjoining the current ex-Caretaker's flat would potentially allow for a through car to fully access every area of the House. The provision of an entrance lobby, accessed via the modified existing window, allows for the wheelchair user to turn ninety degrees to face the car doors, with a straight through access to all floors. The car would need to be a 13 person elevator to allow for the wheelchair to turn one hundred and eighty degrees within it in order to exit.

Extent of works required

The position requires the relocation of the service space of the café adjacent to the stair core and the incorporation of the lift core within the office space within the ex-caretakers flat, which shrinks to accommodate it and a double height lift lobby as level external entry is effectively between the basement and ground floor levels. The external access/stair that allows for emergency escape and deliveries to the café would not be affected.

The position adjacent to the outside wall allows direct access into the lift lobby, and

location of the entrance within the existing window minimizes the alteration work to the façade. The stair access to the basement requires modification at the top of the flight with a safety gate and rail to achieve protection from falling, now that this area has a renewed pattern of use.

On the reception level the lift shaft requires a reorganisation of the ground floor WC's behind the stairs. The chair store is marginally reduced in size, becoming part of a redesigned disabled WC provision. The existing Male WC door off the main stair area will be retained and adapted for wheelchair users with touchpad opening. On the First floor the use of the corridor and part of the sound store would be lost, because of the impact on the entry to the AV room it would need to become the access route to this space, as was originally the case in 1931.

The second floor installation would need to have the current roof vent realigned by one metre, but access to the air-handling room is not affected. In this option, the current staff WC becomes the lift lobby. The simplest option for the relocation of the staff WC is to lace it within the Sound Archive storage room, which is devoid of architectural detail, and allows for a direct and simple connection to the existing external iron SVP.

This location of the lift requires that the shaft breaks through the existing roof to a height equivalent to just below the parapet of the central section of the North-East elevation. This is close to the North façade and therefore presents visibility issues, so the external treatment of the overrun is addressed specifically within the design to minimize impact and emphasize a unity of material and detail.

As with option three, the works to the House are separate from the main administrative functions however the impact in the basement is minimized by providing access to the lift not through the existing café kitchen but directly from the stairwell via a plain rendered wall under the first downward flight of stairs from the reception level.

The location of the shaft remote from the Hall results in no potential vibration or noise issues with the performance space without elaborate isolation strategies.

Historic fabric

The interventions in the fabric are entirely within the post-war reconstruction area. The impact of the shaft on the roofline is significant, with proximity to the elevation requiring detailed consideration.

The Sound Archive is compromised by the lift shaft presence. The majority of the room is preserved and would remain in situ while the room continued its function as library storage.

The shaft would encroach on the three windows to the Northern end of the entry façade, however the windows would remain unaffected. The treatment of this condition requires a specific and sympathetic treatment.

Cost impact

Works to the areas around the stair core to facilitate the shaft construction are in addition to the current costing. However the cost of a conventional 'unseen' shaft construction is substantially lower than a glass/steel exposed structure. The current ductwork within the air-handling room would need realignment, subject to comment from the current maintenance contractors.

Visibility and security

The lift is internal and would require access via the current reception. A new entry sequence with level access addresses all secure access issues.

Achieving 'Full access'

The accessibility provided to users is subordinate to the stair, however its adjacency to the stair and its relative anonymity provides a strong listed building case, while less overtly 'equal' in relation to the presence of the stair.

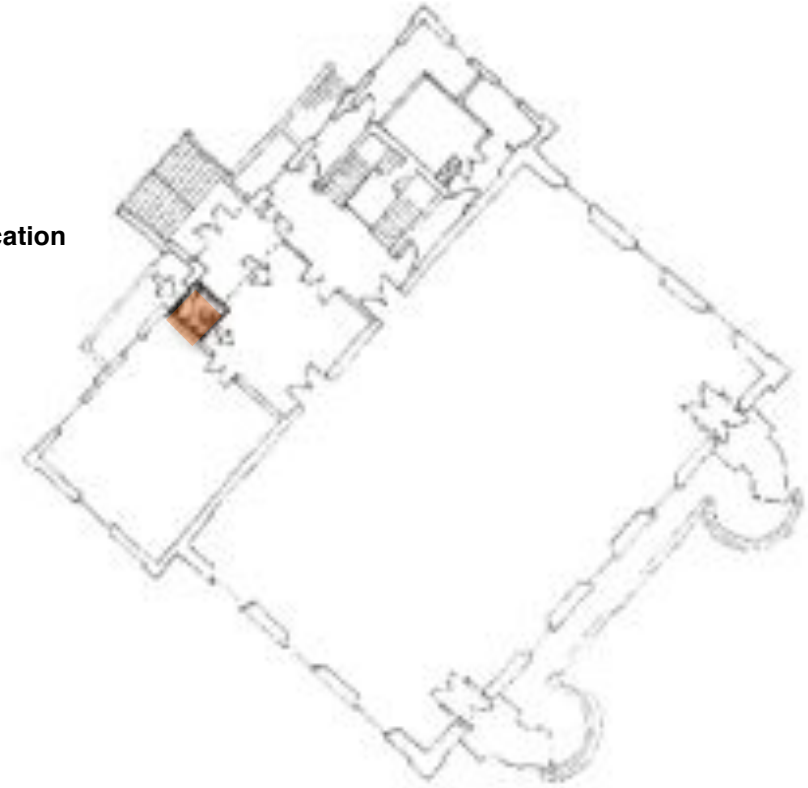
Fire strategy

The corridor, which acts as a lift lobby may be able to act as a wheelchair refuge if appropriate door treatments are adopted, as it is a solid masonry construction. The detail of this element will need to be the subject of further study.

Summary

This option has the potential to be both a short and long term full access solution, however careful intervention in the elevation would be required at external ground level. Redistribution of facilities at each level is required, and while the impact on the air handling equipment is minimized, the Sound Archive is impacted upon.

Rejected option one: lobby location



Navigation and routes

This location directly addresses the current entrance point for the visitor. Its proximity to the Library also allows direct staff access to the archive stores throughout the building. There is minimal impact to the current uses on the basement and upper floors, with some café reorganisation required. Longer term, if the entry sequence shifts to the garden the lift position relates to the stair, which is a fixed element, but its location opposite to the stair means that the current reception area would effectively remain a large circulation hall between the two vertical access elements.

Extent of works required

The installation of the lift shaft requires the punching through of three floors – with a concrete rib and hollow clay void former construction the task of cutting is simpler than reinforced concrete, however the rim of the opening will require reinforced concrete consolidation. The prominent location of the shaft requires a refinement of detail and the use of glass to allow for the existing windows to be retained in a meaningful manner. The specification of a standard DDA approved 8-person lift car is assumed, requiring a 2 metre square opening in each of the floors. Direct access from the driveway requires a through-car installation, and adaptation of the brickwork of the external façade incorporating changes to the basement window.

The servicing of the top floor will require an opening to the roof with associated waterproofing works. These can be undertaken locally and economically and would not be visible behind the parapet. The electrical supply for the installation is likely to require upgrading.

The location of the works requires intervention throughout the building within well-used areas. The shaft position could be dust-proofed and works continued whilst the building is in operation, however noise during breaking through works would require the suspension of activity for some part of the time.

The impact of the lift location to the basement would require in the short term the re-provision of kitchen facilities for the café, expanding the service area adjoining the stair entrance to compensate for the loss of space. With access required for the lift itself the overall seating capacity of the café is likely to reduce by approximately 8-10 seats. In the longer term a relocated café will remove this constraint.

Externally if the stair lift is removed and replaced with direct lift access the immediate external area will require leveling and façade work as above.

On the reception level the existing glazed draught lobby would require modification, potentially repositioning the post-war double doors within a retained framework. Future modifications to the space may render this screen redundant, so minimal intervention at this stage is desirable.

The first floor small office is effectively removed, but the existing partitions can be retained and fire rated, the lift lobby at this level connecting directly to the current access corridor. The second floor has the lift delivering users directly into the rear of the open plan office area, which may require a fire refuge installation.

Historic fabric

The opening up of the reception lobby directly impacts on the decorative cornicing, window and flooring, and structurally through the original floors at all levels. With the post-war reconstruction it can be argued that the historic importance of the decorative scheme is already compromised, and that sympathetic detailing could enhance the reception space if seen within a wider conservation strategy for this space (removal or sympathetic redesign of the fire partition etc. subject to fire safety /building control approval).

However the presence of the lift asymmetrically within the volume of the primary entrance area is not ideal, and it would remove the possibility for this space to be returned to its former primary status should a capital works programme be undertaken at a later date.

Cost impact

The costing exercise dating from 2010 allowed for a steel and glass shaft, with extra-over for servicing the second floor/roof works so costs of a similar order for these elements could be expected. The works to the existing fabric are specialist, would require the commissioning and submission of detailed design drawings for approval, and sub-contractors with relevant skills to undertake the execution.

Visibility and security

The location of the lift would be fully monitored by the current reception area. In future, relocation of the entry sequence impacts only on the ability to enter the lift from the driveway, however with intercom and remote unlocking the external access could prove useful for loading and deliveries to enter the building separately from visitors.

Achieving 'Full access'

The location of the stair and lift at reception level within the same space is a positive statement about equal access, and minimizes the differentiation between types of user. If detailed carefully, the lift can assume equal status with the stair. The lift would not serve the half level rooms currently used by the Bridge Theatre group (ex Caretaker's flat)

Fire strategy

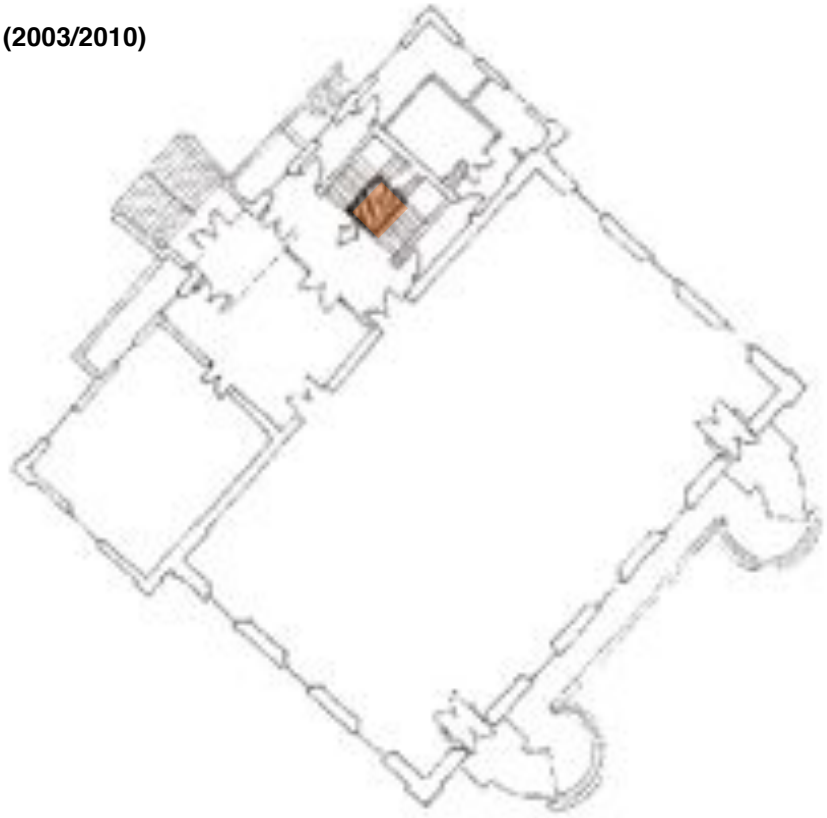
The installation of any lift shaft will require adequate fire/smoke breaks between floors.

There is a requirement for a disabled refuge provision on basement, first and second floor, the detail of which will need to be the subject of further study to obtain the relevant approvals.

Summary

The option provides a full access option with both current entrance use and for any future entry relocation. Un-reversible works to the fabric of the Listed building are significant for the structure and for the elevation, requiring the alteration of brickwork, basement and ground floor window. The design resolution will require careful consideration as the lift is in a prominent location, particularly if light through the ground and upper level windows is to be maintained.

Rejected option two: stair location (2003/2010)



Navigation and routes

Developed in 2003, this location ties the stair and lift together, so the focus of the vertical access through the levels of the House is maintained. The lift dominates the stair, and is likely to be the preferred method for most of the users, so potentially creating congestion on the existing stair landings.

Extent of works required

Camden's Unitary Development Plan is now being replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework that establishes a new raft of Local Development Plans and conservation requirements - so the permission given in 2003 will now be assessed under new criteria that are yet to be tested. It is clear that via the principle of fair access, the lift requirement is understood by Camden, however the location and impact of a full height installation has not been scrutinized.

The 2003 scheme did not serve the second floor, allowing the existing stair lantern to be retained. Full access would require the lantern to be removed and a new section of roof to be installed approximately 300mmm higher than the existing.

The work is described in a quotation from the Project Lift Company (16th June 2010), but in addition to the quotation the detailed resolution of the installation will be required within any revised Listed building consent.

Historic fabric

The works described in the 2010 quotation leaves open the resolution of the detailed intervention to the stair, but the largest threat to a full access installation is the impact of the installation on the stair lantern. Despite being a post-war restoration, the lantern provides an important spatial and qualitative effect to the stair, and the elimination of this detail, even if partially replaced by an alternative day-lighting detail is an important Listed building discussion point. The removal of the existing balustrade to allow for car access could potentially allow for reinstatement, but this is not clear. The nature of the necessary fixings into the existing stair is uncertain.

Cost impact

The installation of the lift in this location is covered partially by the 2010 quotation, but may not cover additional cost implications that arise from more exacting Listed Building requirements.

Visibility and security

The location of the lift is currently fully monitored by the reception area.

Achieving 'Full access'

The full integration of lift and stair achieves a very visible unified access provision, however the dominance of the lift over the stair alters the emphasis of access, prioritizing the lift (sedentary) over stairs (active), and this has wellbeing issues for staff. Full access is obtained in this option in the long term through future level access from the garden, or as a compromised short-term solution by the retention of the existing inadequate stair lift to the existing entrance.

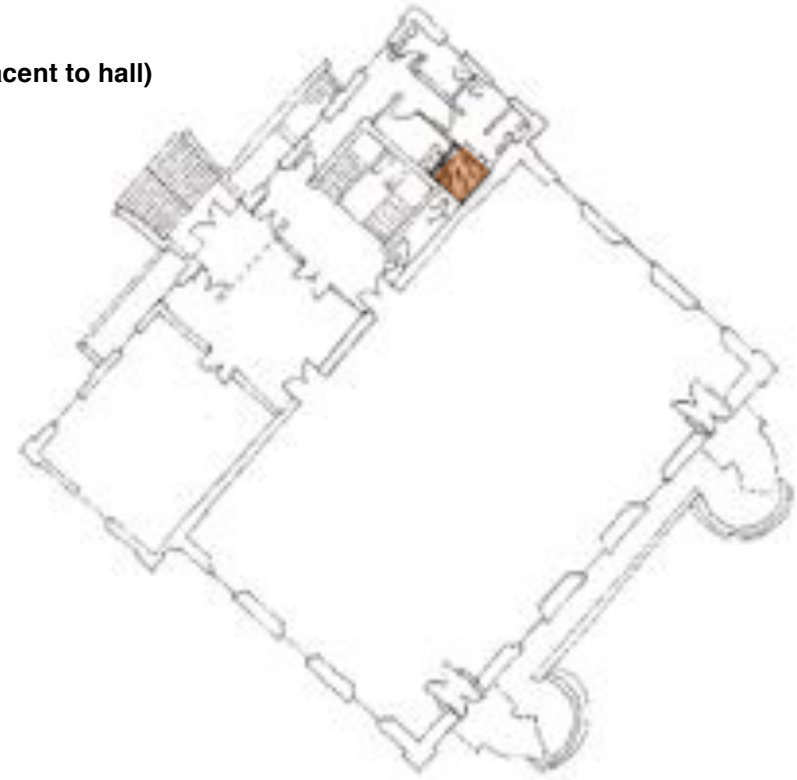
Fire strategy

The current stair compartmentation is likely to be considered adequate, but may require doors and partition up-rating, with areas reserved for the refuge.

Summary

This option requires physical intervention that has a spatially significant impact on the existing stair. In the short term the location fails to provide full access, and only does so with a full reconfiguration of the entrance with level access.

Rejected option three: stair core (adjacent to hall)



Navigation and routes

This option prioritises the stair as the primary vertical circulation, while placing the lift access on a potential future route from the garden. The location of the lift adjoining the current Bridge Theatre space would allow for a through car to access this area of the House, however in the short term, until the entrance is configured the stair lift would need to remain.

Extent of works required

The position requires both the shaft and lift lobbies to actively displace existing uses. On the basement level the 'strong room' and small store on the cranked corridor would be lost to open up the space, and the exit from the stairwell possibly re-orientated into this newly cleared lobby (providing additional space to the current café area).

On the reception level the lift shaft requires a reorganization of the ground floor WC and chair store access to the North façade corridor behind the stairs. The location of the lift makes possible the use of the Bridge Theatre space as a comprehensive chair and equipment store, as the lift would allow ready access. The existing Female WC door can be retained and adapted for wheelchair users.

On the First floor the use of the corridor as a store would be lost, together with the new presence of the lift shaft in the corner of the sound archive. In the short term this creates storage issues for the current stock located here, in the longer term the consolidation of the archive as a part of a capital works programme would address this.

The current vertical air-handling duct riser could be retained in this position, but may also be relocated as part of future works. The second floor access to the air-handling units would in the short term require access to be relocated into the staff WC via a new door, Entering into the plant room would be difficult as there is equipment to clamber over.

The location of the shaft outside the post-war second storey requires that the lift shaft break through the existing roof to a height equivalent to the parapet of the central section of the North-East elevation. This will require sympathetic treatment with regard to the appearance of the Listed Building, however its position to the rear of the administration block, the height of the Hall roof and the presence of the existing brick chimney mitigates the impact.

The works to the House are separate from the main administrative functions so impact on the running of the House is minimized. Access to the Bar during the installation would need to be via Trefusis by re-opening the original door currently blocked, with alteration of the fire escape signage to suit.

Historic fabric

The interventions in the fabric are almost entirely within the post-war reconstruction area, however the basement lift lobby affects a section of the original building. The impact of the shaft on the roofline is significant, however can be set within a context of the higher chimney and hall roof. The Sound archive has period fittings and joinery that is of real merit as part of the story of the House, and these are only slightly affected by the installation.

Cost impact

Works to the areas around the stair core to facilitate the shaft construction are in addition to the current costing, however the cost of a conventional ‘unseen’ shaft construction is substantially lower than a glass/steel exposed structure. The proximity of the shaft to the Hall would require structural separation through the construction of a separate blockwork shaft without ties to the Hall wall. The current ductwork as it enters the hall within the air-handling room would need realignment, subject to confirmation by the current maintenance contractors. Possible underpinning and removal of part of the half floor in the ex-caretakers flat would be time-consuming and costly however.

Visibility and security

The lift is internal and would require access via the current reception in the short term, or via any relocated secure access point in the longer term.

Achieving 'Full access'

The accessibility provided to users is subordinate to the stair, however its adjacency to the stair and careful treatment of the basement Lobby should ensure it is visibly integrated into the fabric of the building. In the short term the existing stair lift will need to be retained.

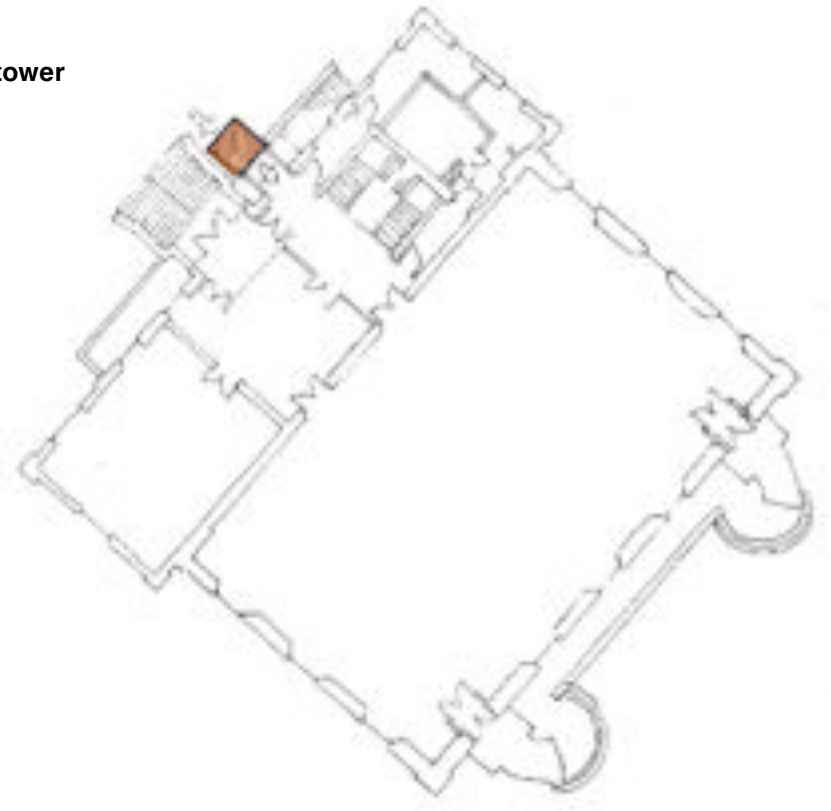
Fire strategy

The corridor that acts as a lift lobby may be able to act as a wheelchair refuge if the appropriate door treatments are adopted, as it is a solid masonry construction. The detail of the refuge will need to be the subject of further study.

Summary

This option requires significant reorganization internally that, whilst delivering a logical layout for a Garden access scenario, does not provide full access in the short term. Key internal details such as the stair and sound archive are maintained, but the roofline is affected with the lift headgear required at a level equivalent to the higher parapet level. The impact on the current air handling system is undefined, although long term this equipment should be relocated.

Rejected option four: external tower



Navigation and routes

This proposal is for a detached tower with short glazed bridge links through the existing window openings. Such an installation addresses full access to all main floors and external driveway level. The latter allows for the removal of the stair lift, and the access to the lift for deliveries or musical instrument drop off would be of major benefit, potentially enhancing EFDSS' ability to rent out the Hall and increase its income as a result.

The idea of externally located access via stairs to all floors was defined within the Stillman and Eastwick-Field Architects scheme in 1983 and the Anthony Richardson and Partners Feasibility study from 1988. An external location was defined for potential lift access within the 2010 Project Lift Company quotation.

With the lift located visibly externally, navigation would be relatively easy, and comprehensible to all users. The entry point to the lift on each floor would be adjacent to the stair landing but subsidiary to it providing undifferentiated access on each floor to both stair and lift within an economic circulation route.

Extent of works required

The construction of the shaft is external to activities within the building and offers minimal operational disruption or alterations to current functions or fabric, except to

the café level where impacts are as per option one. Works to the existing windows

require the removal of the crittall windows, with modification to the existing brick façade window cill areas required. The location is sited where post war reconstruction was extensive, so original fabric is unaffected.

Historic fabric

The actual impact on the existing fabric is minimal. The removal of a vertical run of windows is reversible if they are stored carefully on site, and structural connections into the masonry are minimal to support the bridge floor and enclosure. The chief impact is visual, and whilst the new 'tower' makes for a strong asymmetrical and arguably disruptive element on the North façade, equally from a historic fabric perspective it is the most 'light touch', and the visual impact can be contextualised within careful consideration of both fabric and use.

The North façade of Cecil Sharp House is not seen in its entirety other than in oblique views where its symmetrical design is not highly visible owing to the presence of the protruding entrance steps and the post-war second floor addition (which obscures the original design concept of two towers with a lower central section). The context of the House's neighbours is both asymmetric and problematic – particularly that of the flank wall of the dwelling house on Gloucester Avenue which is both closer and of a more prominent design than that of the house on Regent's Park Road.

Internally the integrity of the reception space would be preserved if the lift doors and the use of glazing are carefully considered.

Cost impact

The construction would require external treatment and therefore additional cost over the internal location. However internal modifications are as per option one, but without the cutting through the floor-plates and associated making good.

Visibility and security

The access from the driveway will require intercom provision, particularly if the reception location is moved as part of any future capital works reorganization, however the lift entry within the building is fully visible.

Achieving 'Full access'

In the short term, this location achieves distinct and immediate access for all visitors, and longer term it establishes a simple relationship between lift and stair as per option one but with tighter circulation and consequently easier way-finding on the upper floors.

Fire strategy

Refuge details will need to be the subject of further study. The external location is relatively fire safe providing the cladding is flame resistant.

Summary

This option has minimal disruption to the internal workings of the house, and proves full access immediately. The location adjacent to the stair means that the existing reception can function as more than a circulation area. The impact on the appearance of the North Elevation is significant, and will require a sensitive consideration of its appearance. Pre-consultation delivered a critical reception and set out external appearance priorities over internal fabric retention.

The task became one of integration of the shaft within the existing building form whilst minimizing the alteration of existing fabric.

4 Access statement

4.1 EFDSS Chief Executive and Access Group summaries

The Chief Executive's response provides an overview of the Society's position in regards to achieving full access as part of their long-term strategy to enhance the effectiveness and success of the organisation. It is clear that the need to make the building fully accessible is not only a human necessity, nor simply a legal one, but is fundamental to the viability of EFDSS itself. Providing full access is a part of presenting the Society as a viable institution, capable of operating as a truly public resource, and also as a rental venue that generates both subsistence income and the ability to achieve match funding through reasonable turnover. The installation of a lift will allow EFDSS to bid for and secure important investment in its fabric and its future. Achieving full access is therefore a requirement for both practical and strategic reasons.

The lift is imperative not only for visitors and staff who are unable to use steps, but will also provide for the safe delivery of goods and instruments (as required by hire agreements). These obligations focus the lift location options to those that allow for direct access to the external delivery area on the North elevation. Both the Chief Executive and Access Group responses clarify the reasoning for the Society's preference for the fully external option.

4.2 Evidence

Principal entrance: the disabled drop off point is located and will be signed directly outside the lift entrance, where a video intercom allows for access monitored by reception to be given. The main entrance is a significant staircase protected by listing, a well-designed sign directing disabled visitors not familiar with the building will be provided. Guidance on sign-posting given in BS 8300, Inclusive mobility and the Sign design guide will be followed.

Suitable: The new lift entry lobby will be provided with a powered opening mechanism requiring minimal strength and dexterity to operate. The revised disabled WC provision retains the existing two facilities, each to be unisex, each closed fully from the other. Each facility has integral washbasin so communal basins are not required or desirable.

Usable: all access to disabled facilities will be with level thresholds and wheelchair usable floor surfaces. Doorways are generous, allowing for unaided use for visitors or staff with moderate dexterity.

Inclusive: the decorative scheme will provide a difference in light reflectance value between two surfaces greater than 30 points.

To reduce the risks to people, particularly people with impaired sight, the private drive is to be maintained reasonably level and free from steps or raised joints. The disabled parking and drop-off are adjacent to the main stairs and lift entrance.

The door entry system is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people, and people who cannot speak through both audio and visual link, allowing direct help to be provided through pro-active management of reception.

The internal floor surfaces adjacent to the threshold are of materials that do not impede the movement of wheelchairs, with the lift entry lobby and lift paved in sawn Portland stone tiles set smooth and flat without deviation across the joints.

The door opening furniture can be operated with one hand using a closed fist. Original ironmongery will be retained where possible, where new lever handles or doors are to be provided all door opening furniture will contrast visually with the surface of the door.

Manifestation in the form of a line of text 50mm high will run continuously across the new/restored reception glazing screens and double doors.

The clear manoeuvring space in front of the free-standing reception desk or counter is at least 2000mm deep and 800mm wide with a knee recess at least 500mm deep. The reception desk counter is designed to accommodate both standing and seated visitors such that at least one section of the counter is at least 500mm wide, with its surface no higher than 760mm, and a knee recess, not less than 700mm, above floor level. An induction loop will be provided to reception.

The reception point is easily identifiable from the entrance doors for ambulant users, or lift/stair lobby for lift users, and the approach to it is direct and free from obstructions. The proposal for a glass screen is motivated by the need for lift users to connect directly with the reception desk where currently this is not possible, whilst maintaining fire separation between stair and reception.

The lift size has been chosen to suit the anticipated density of use of the building and the needs of disabled people. The car is a 13-person elevator with an internal space to allow for an accompanied wheelchair user to be able to turn 180 degrees.

5 Reception Area and associated alterations

5.1 Reception Area

The stair was fully reconstructed in 1951, retaining its place in an open reception area as originally conceived. The finely scaled glass and steel draught lobby was added, together with glazed entry doors, enhancing light levels and lending an ambiguous modernity to the space. Later fire regulation required the partitioning off of the stair from the reception to facilitate escape from upper levels directly into the draught lobby, which had the fine steel and glass entry doors replaced with aluminium and glass versions at some point.

With the proposed lift lobby entering the protected stair zone through the timber door shown centre of fig 8. it is important to re-establish visual connection between visitor and reception desk to aid navigation, and to enhance the ability of staff to assist or support disabled users. The 1951 glazed installation remains in-situ, with some unsympathetic alteration, and when restored as per Fig 8. Provides a pattern for the replacement of the plasterboard partition screen and double doors with a steel framed fire glass screen. The contrasting colour scheme also contributes to the legibility of the space for visually impaired users, and its restoration will provide a striking impression for visitors to EFDSS.

Fig 8. The postwar reception screen.

Fig 9. Impression of proposed Reception fire screen

Drawing CSH 202 indicates an integral display cabinet to allow for a shift in plane so that the screen lines through with the existing down-stand beam above for its full length, whilst stepping into the reception area at lower level to facilitate the opening of the double doors to Kennedy Hall. The cabinet forms part of a considered exhibition strategy to animate the reception with a changing programme of curated shows. The desk itself will be treated as a stand-alone piece of furniture, and conforms to DDA requirements for height, set back and useable space for both disabled visitors and staff.

5.2 WC provision Ground and First Floor

The lift shaft and lobby require the relocation of the two ground floor full access WC's, and the retention of the chair store for functions in Kennedy Hall. The WC dividing walls are of blockwork, rendered and painted with gloss paint, with a hygienic linoleum flooring covering the WC area. The chair store retains a screed floor finish. The existing reeded glass to the windows, and iron waste pipework is retained.

The removal of the urinals to the Gentleman's WC requires that this provision be relocated within the building to maintain visitor number ratio's. The basement Gentlemen's WC will have the existing urinals replaced with a larger fireclay trough-type facility to accommodate the relocation. The current basement and ground floor urinal facilities are less than ten yeas old and have no intrinsic value to the listed building.

5.3 Visibility of lift shaft through existing windows

The device of utilizing a curtain, a re-edition of the original 1950 curtain fabric by Alec Hunter, to cover the edge of the shaft from view is used to mitigate the sight of he shaft at each level, in a manner sympathetic to the language of the window by utilizing the heritage of the house itself.

Fig 10. Curtain fabric commissioned for the 1951 refurbishment, design by Alec Hunter

5.4 Rooftop alterations for lift overrun

The lift overrun requires a dimension of 3.2 metres from top floor level to underside of the overrun roof covering. The raised top section of the shaft sits 280mm below the parapet of the second floor elevation, and within the line of the adjoining low parapet wall, allowing the existing parapets to be retained without alteration.

The materiality of the overrun enclosure is proposed as brick, utilizing salvaged bricks from the alterations to ensure an exact match, with coping stones and rebated corner detail to ensure the new rooftop addition is visually unobtrusive by maintaining a consistent detail language.

Fig 11. External visualization of lift overrun detailed in brick

5.5 First Floor stair landing – plan form

The lift location requires that one of the two access routes either side of the stair is reconfigured as a lift lobby. To maintain access to the 'sound archive' a recently blocked door, currently defining a storage area needs to be re-opened. This has the advantage or restoring a symmetrical pair of doors either side of the stair to the landing area, reclaiming the postwar plan form. Within the bare storage area a staff WC is relocated from the new lift lobby, utilizing the existing cast iron external SVP.

5.6 Refuse store and external treatment around the new entry

The existing cycle racks, bin store and service entry presents a disaggregated set of provisions that do not enhance the setting of the House, nor provide a suitable backdrop to the new entry. A proposal to use landscape elements such as a beech hedge and hazel hurdles to contain the large refuse bins, and to clarify the view of the house without introducing either pastiche or contrasting architectural detailing. The design aims to improve the outlook of the neighbouring property at the same time as the outlook within the site.

6 Conclusion and proposition

The range of lift location options is accompanied by a range of compromises. The interventions that create the least impact on the fabric of the building can create the most visual impact – some are potentially exciting, some detrimental.

The insertion of this key vertical lift access opens up the House to all, however the fragile identity of the House needs to be preserved and ideally enhanced through this potentially damaging intervention, not negated or weakened.

The only installation that spans neatly across that divide is the selected option, which provides full access, and through its proximity to the stair and allows the existing reception area to be repaired to regain clarity and reinforce the unique identity of the building as a contemporary custodian of ancient tradition.

The proposal allows for minimal disruption during construction, being at a remove from the main entrance, library, performance space and office environment. However, in terms of external appearance, the design of the entrance and weatherproof enclosure of the upper lift element required very careful consideration, having architectural obligations to the House and the Conservation Area beyond.

Cecil Sharp House had, and has, real qualities that are currently masked, and the building forms as important a document for the English Folk Dance ad Song Society as any of the books in its collection. The development of the building should, in the authors' opinion, undertake to make the building legible to visitors, as well as fulfilling enhanced operational requirements for the Society.

Appendix 1

List description for Cecil Sharp House

Grade: II
Date first listed: 22-Dec-1987

Listing NGR: TQ2844683756

CAMDEN TQ2883NW REGENT'S PARK ROAD 798-1/75/1383 (North side) 22/12/87 Cecil Sharp House II Headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. 1929-30. By HM Fletcher. For the English Folk Dance Society. Partly rebuilt 1949-51 after war damage. Brown brick and tiled, hipped roof. Neo-Georgian style. Rectangular plan on a triangular corner site. EXTERIOR: 1 to 2 storeys plus basement. Front facade of 1 tall storey, 5 bays. Square-headed stone-architraved doorways with wooden panelled doors to end bays; approached by steps with cast-iron railings. Gauged brick flat arches to tall metal framed windows with margin glazing and small panes articulating the double height dance hall. Pilaster strips at angles continue through parapet with brick band to terminate with stone ball finials. INTERIOR: following the post-war rebuilding a former musicians' gallery in the dance hall was replaced by a large specially commissioned (approx 20m long) mural painting by Ivon Hitchens, which is of historic and artistic interest. Other walls of hall wooden panelled to window height. HISTORICAL NOTE: Cecil Sharp collected, edited, performed and wrote about English folk-songs and dances; he was the leader of the modern English folk-music revival. He joined the Committee of the Folk Song Society in 1904 and founded the English Folk Dance Society in 1911; the societies amalgamated in 1932. The building houses Sharp's library which he bequeathed on his death in 1924.

Appendix 2

Advice from the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee, 12a Manley Street London NW1 8LT based on the external tower option one

9 February 2012

Cecil Sharp House Regent's Park Road London NW1: pre-application review
1. Very many thanks for briefing members of the CAAC, and our student colleagues, and for tea, at Cecil Sharp House on Wednesday 1 February 2012. The Committee was able to review the options at our meeting later that evening.

2. **The issue of accessibility:** the Committee understands and accepts the importance of non- discriminatory access for all to the building. We acknowledge that the present arrangements are not satisfactory, not only in terms of access to the main Hall level, but also to other floors of the building, including the basement and office accommodation at the second floor.

3. **The means of achieving access:** the Committee considered the proposals on the basis that a fully-accessible lift, conforming to DDA requirements, and serving all floors of the building, is required.

4. The Committee therefore focussed on the possible locations of such a lift, not on questioning the need for such provision.

4.1 It was recognized that one major factor in determining the location of a lift is the need to provide access from the exterior ground level, which is approximately a half-storey-height below the level of the main entrance area.

4.2 We understand that the current stair lift is not acceptable on management and other grounds, including the very important needs of visitors who use a wheel chair. Committee members asked if the provision of an external platform lift, which might be positioned directly adjacent to the main steps, could be acceptable. If it were acceptable, it would, of course, increase the number of viable options for the location of a lift serving all internal floors.

4.3 If such a platform lift is unacceptable, then we take the view that options 2, 3 and 6 do not meet the basic requirement. We would also have serious objections on Listed Building grounds to Option 2, within the stair.

5. On the remaining 3 options the Committee's advice is as follows. 5.1.0 Option 5 external tower:

5.1.1 While it was accepted that this would provide a functionally satisfactory solution, members of the Committee saw it as unacceptable in terms of both the special character of the Listed Building, and of the need to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. In broader, less technical, terms, the Committee thought such an addition would be sadly damaging to a building that is thought of as a landmark in the neighbourhood.

5.1.2 It is, to say the least, unfortunate that the List description is so inadequate. We have provided our own initial analysis of the critical elements of the building in terms of the present consultation. We have not drawn here on the larger context of H. M. Fletcher's work, as published, which provides pointers to the significance of his choice of a formal geometry of plan form, although that formality has to be one consideration in terms of the proposed tower.

5.1.3 The entrance front to Cecil Sharp House is characterized by its strong symmetry but also by its determinedly flat elevation – reinforced by the shallow window recesses – which is however, subtly modulated. The symmetry is based around a central bay. The central block of 5 bays has been given added significance by the addition of the upper storey, which we understand was added when war-damage was repaired in 1949-51, and well before the building was listed in 1987. The two side bays are modulated by window widths reflecting those of the central bay, but also by the use of pilaster strips, in the form of a 'giant order', two framing each bay. The pilasters have broader bases which have the form of plinths. The pilasters are linked to simple horizontal stringlines at ground-floor level, and at the foot of the original attic storey. These features, especially the 'giant order' pilasters reflect the English neo-Georgian interest in earlier English domestic architecture and provide subtle, but critical elements in the modulation of what is otherwise a flat elevation. Both these critical characteristics of the entrance elevation of the Listed Building – the symmetry and the subtle modulation of the plane surface – would be significantly harmed by the addition of a lift tower.

5.1.4 We do not see the very successful use of a lift tower at the rear of the York and Albany as a valid comparison here.

5.1.5 The entrance front also needs to be considered in terms of the relation of the building to its site, as both the setting of the Listed Building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. The main entrance is already approached obliquely, and by a relatively narrow driveway. The addition of a tower would further diminish the sense of space at this point, and further add to the sense, especially when approaching from the Gloucester Avenue side, of a service area.

5.1.6 In this context, we welcome the comments on the need to take active steps to enhance the landscape around the building, especially on the entrance front. The references to the 'pastoral' intention of the external space ('Feasibility study', p. 5) are welcome, and could provide the basis for a real enhancement of the entrance front to the building. The opportunity for increasing the 'pastoral' quality of the relatively narrow space available in this part of the site would, however, be significantly diminished by the addition of the lift tower.

5.2.1 We see merits in both Option 1 lobby and Option 4 facade core, and hope to see them more fully detailed.

5.2.2 We observe that Option 1 would appear to be no more intrusive at basement level than the access needed for Option 5, and that Option 1 need not, especially if access to the second floor were limited to staff, require significant changes to circulation at that level.

5.2.3 We recognize the advantages of bringing the lift close to the main circulation core of the main stairs.

6. The consideration of a garden entrance ('Feasibility study', pp. 26-27). We were unable to assess how such an entrance would relate to the proposed lift options.

I hope this is helpful. We recognize that this is a project requiring careful consideration, and would be happy to continue to discuss your developing proposals. If it would be helpful a sub-group of the Committee could take such discussion forward with you, reporting back to the main Committee as required.

Richard Simpson,

Chair PHCAAC.

Appendix 3

Pre-application comment *based on the external tower option one, including comment on the proposed reception area alterations*

Lift

We discussed the revised position of the lift (option 4 in the December 2011 feasibility study). This is now to be located internally which avoids the significant visual impact of the previously proposed external lift. Its discrete position adjacent to the main original staircase allows the spatial quality of the reception hall to remain unaltered whilst still providing direct external access from ground level. This will also allow the existing unsightly stair lift to be removed from the main entrance. As the lift is located in part of the building that was significantly rebuilt following WWII bomb damage, there will be no loss of original fabric as a result of the internal modifications. Externally, the provision of a new entrance door to the lift will require the modification of an existing window on the west elevation. This is generally in character with the remainder of the façade and should be relatively discrete.

The key compromise with this solution is the potential visual impact of the lift over run, which I understand has been reduced in height as far as is technically possible. This is located adjacent to the parapet wall on the west elevation and will be visible from Gloucester Avenue. It will be important to consider how this impact can be mitigated, particularly in terms of finish and materials. Perspective drawings would be useful as part of the application so as to assess this impact. Nonetheless, in my view the current lift option offers the most appropriate balance between conserving the fabric of the building, visual impact and operational requirements.

Reception

We also discussed works to the main reception, primarily the replacement of the modern plasterboard partition that has been inserted so as to provide fire separation and a protected means of escape to the main staircase. Building Control has confirmed that separation is still required. Scheme A, consisting of a fully glazed partition from the underside of the existing downstand beam, in my view is the most appropriate solution. This would need to be realigned adjacent to the doors into the main hall but this could be incorporated logically into a glazed display case and the reception desk. I understand that you will prepare further detailed drawings for consideration.

As we discussed during the meeting, a structural report will need to be submitted with the application detailing the possible impact upon the listed building, particularly in terms of any underpinning. With regards to a BIA, you will need to address the checklist in Camden's CPG 4 on basements so as to provide the correct level of information at application stage.

Hannah Walker
Principal Planner (Conservation and Design) Regeneration and Planning
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Appendix 4

Architects experience

Arts Lettres Techniques is a practice that specialises in sensitive contemporary interventions in historic and listed buildings.

Alan Chandler BA (Hons) AA Dipl. RIBA SCA FHEA is a registered Specialist Conservation Architect and acts for the RIBA as an assessor to the Conservation Register. Chandler is also a member of the RIBA Professional Education Committee, the RIBA Conservation Group, and an education Adviser to The Edinburgh Group (part of COTAC).

Arts Lettres Techniques has had its work and research published in the Architects Journal, RIBA Journal, the SPAB Journal, Vogue, Bolig (Sweden), Grand Designs, Arquitectura Viva (Spain) and Elle Deco, (Sweden), and has been the subject of lectures at the SPAB, the Kent Conservation Officers Group, the University of Bath, the University of Birmingham, the University of Brighton, Cambridge University, Oxford Brookes, the University of East London, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Manitoba (Canada), Queens University (Belfast) and the TU Berlin.

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