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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | | Expiry Date: | | 22/09/2011 | |
| | | N/A / attached | | Consultation Expiry Date: | | 08/09/2011 | |
| Officer | | | | Application Number(s) | | | |
| Catherine Bond | | | | 2011/3921/L | | | |
| Application Address | | | | Drawing Numbers | | | |
| The British Museum Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DG | | | | Refer to decision notice | | | |
| PO 3/4 | Area Team Signature | C&UD | Authorised Officer Signature | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Proposal(s) | | | | | | | |
| Internal alterations to include upgrade work to existing fire alarm and emergency lighting (FAEL) works to Hotung Gallery, installation of free-standing columns for the incorporation of hold-open devices for doors and fire alarm break glass call points with associated cable runs below flooring to North stairs of the King Edward VII building (Class D1) | | | | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | Grant listed building consent | | | | | |
| Application Type: | | Listed Building Consent | | | | | |
| Conditions or Reasons for Refusal: | | Refer to Decision Notice | | | | | |
| Informatives: | | | | | | | |
| Consultations | | | | | | | |
| Adjoining Occupiers: | | No. notified | 00 | No. of responses | 00 | No. of objections | 00 |
| | | | | No. electronic | 00 | | |
| Summary of consultation responses: | | Site notice and press notice – no responses English Heritage letter dated 22 August 2011 stating that its specialist staff have considered the information received and do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. | | | | | |
| CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify | | N/A | | | | | |

Site Description

Grade I listed museum building situated on the north side of Great Russell Street within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The original portions of the building date from 1823-47 and were built to the designs of Robert Smirke. Constructed of Portland stone it was originally planned as a big quadrangle with an open central courtyard. The building consists of two principal storeys and adheres to the Greek Revival style in the most part. Various additions, most recent of which is the Norman Foster designed Great Court scheme which created a central glass covered space around the Sidney Smirke designed Reading Room dating 1852-57.

Relevant History

19/01/2011: listed building consent ref 2010/6161/L granted for internal works on north stairs fire alarm and emergency lighting at level North entrance and upgrading fire alarm and emergency lighting installation including building works.

19/08/2011: listed building consent ref 2011/3482/L granted for internal works including north stairs fire alarm and emergency lighting (FAEL) to main staircase; upgrading FAEL installation including provision of fire curtains, smoke detection, renewing lighting, alarm and associated building work.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

Policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

Policy DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

Assessment

The proposed works are in conjunction with the replacement of the existing fire alarm and emergency lighting systems within the north entrance to the King Edward Building (subject of listed building consent ref 2011/3482/L). The Museum is embarking on a major upgrading of the electrical services infrastructure including the fire alarm and emergency lighting (FAEL) together with implementing the strategic fire plan prepared by LWF Fire Engineering and Fire Risk Management Consultants throughout the building. These works are essential for the protection and evacuation of staff and visitors and for the protection of the collections and building fabric.

This project relates to upgrading the provision of call points and door control to improve the alarm installation and to maintain the compartmentation to the North Stairs in the King Edward Building.

The proposal comprises new free-standing columns incorporating hold-open devices for the doors and fire alarm break glass call points. These installations are considered essential for the continued safe operation of the Museum and have been designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the existing fabric. This option has been chosen to avoid disruption to historic plaster and marble caused by forming new pockets and chases. The free-standing columns will be constructed from steel with a bronze finish, which is considered to be in keeping with the aesthetic appearance of the Hotung Gallery.

The proposals are to conceal all cabling so as not to detract visually from the special interest of the listed building, particularly apparent in the Hotung Gallery which is acknowledged as being an area of high significance in the museum building. A limited number of marble slabs around the entrance will have to be lifted in order to bury the cables within the screed/bedding, but these works will not cause any harm to the historic fabric. Cabling will run to existing points within the walls at low level, and any disturbance of wall finishes will be reinstated with materials and finishes to match existing like-for-like. Areas with a gold leaf on walls in the space will not be affected by the proposal.

The proposed works are considered necessary to the functioning of the Museum in the 21st century and have been designed and sited so as to minimise their impact. It is therefore recommended that consent is granted. The proposals comply with LDF policies CS14 and DP25.

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