

# Relocation of 2 Number Condensers within the Area to 8 Montague Street WC1

## PROJECT STATEMENT

### Background

The Museum has within the basements of numbers 8-11 Montague Street its conservation workshops which carry out important work in conserving the collections and preparing for both research and display in the permanent galleries and special exhibitions.

The basement of number 8 Montague Street is the location of the Ceramics, Glass and Metals Conservation Workshop. This workshop requires high levels of ventilation and the management of air temperature and humidity to provide optimum conditions for conserving the fragile objects made of these materials. Air quality is also essential for the health and safety of the staff working in this workshop.

In updating and improving the air systems to maintain the high quality work being carried out, 2 new condensers were required which need to have access to outside air to function. The new plant has to be close to the area it is serving. Investigations were conducted to find a convenient location that could be accessed readily for installation and on-going maintenance. Owing to the present arrangement of workshops and existing plant no location on the rear of the building could be found without very costly major works.

The preferred solution was to locate them in the front area of the building.

### Proposal

It is proposed to position the units on the outside wall of the area which backs onto the street. The units will again be supported upon standard uni-strut brackets which are fixed to the existing brick wall. The chosen position means that the installation is not visible to the ordinary passer-by and can only be seen obliquely from the entrance stairs to both 8 and 9 Montague Street.

To further reduce the visual impact of this plant the units will be enclosed by a simple plywood structure with louvred wooden doors which open only for maintenance. The whole construction will be painted to match the existing colour of the wall.

The route for the services to and from the units will be run discreetly along the building elevation at door head height and then carried along the underside of the arch over the area which supports the access steps to number 8 and finally along the street-side wall to the units. This route minimises the visibility of the services and is the least damaging to the appearance of the listed building. These services will be fixed within standard containment which will again be painted to match the colour of the walls etc. further reducing their visual impact.

There will of necessity be some re-positioning of the items presently also fixed to the wall – fire extinguisher box and hazard sign - but this will offer the opportunity to give them a more coherent arrangement.

### Design approach

The design approach taken has been to keep the visual clutter in the area to a minimum by painting the existing ductwork and the new enclosure and service route to match the existing wall colour so a consistent and coherent appearance is achieved.

The fixings to the structure are all reversible and as such will have a negligible and least detrimental impact on the original fabric.

The proposed timber enclosure is simple and practical in form and suitable to its utilitarian function being very similar to other such installation found elsewhere on the Museum site.

The re-positioning of the other items on the wall has again followed the minimising of clutter so that they now read as a single composition rather than a number of disparate objects.

### Environmental approach

The Museum is aware of the requirement to establish the impact of the transference of sound from the equipment to the adjacent properties and the street. This in part informed the choice of plant which is noted for its quiet operation. A report was commissioned to record the equipment in its present location and the findings of the consultants EnviroSound Ltd can be found appended to this package of information under Supporting Documentation. The findings of their report were that the units complied with Camden's background noise standards at 5dBA which is at the lower end of the 5-10dBA level set by Camden.

The new location and the provision of the timber enclosure will further help reduce the transference of noise and will provide an even lower dBA level.