

## **61 Lincoln's Inn Fields and 42 Kingsway: Owner's Design Statement**

### **The Urban Design Opportunity:**

The current proposals relate to what were originally three buildings, two facing Kingsway, and one facing Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Our understanding is that in the early 1980's, 36-38 Kingsway and 61 Lincoln's Inn Fields were combined to create an office building. The façade of 36-38 Kingsway was retained, but the rest of the building was replaced. Deep basements were created. Typical of office buildings, the upper floors were all given the same storey height, and this created difficulties in trying to link the façade visually with more traditional neighbours where the upper floors tended to have lower storey heights. The floors are basically split into two by a light well. The lifts are small and inadequate for the inter-floor traffic created by a single office user. In short, the building does not function well as the central administrative office for Cancer Research UK, and this and its limited size are the main reasons why they are moving out to new offices at the Angel, Islington.

The third building in the group is the Lutyens office, originally designed for William Robinson, editor of the Garden, with Pilditch and Co as the executive architect. Though a relatively early Lutyens work the building surprisingly to us was not well published at the time, and the reviews we found were not very supportive of the design – blaming Lutyens willful façade for creating substandard office spaces behind. However, it is now an important building, Grade 2 Listed, and it does have some very interesting elements. Our initial approach was to find all we could, by research at the Metropolitan Archives, the RIBA Drawings Collection, Library, and personal contact with Lutyens expert Margaret Richardson. There is very little published information. We decided to retain Lutyens expert and Lutyens Trust Board Member, Mervyn Miller, to help us understand the building and come up with proposals which would ensure its viable use long into the future. Though not ranked in the Listing statement, it is pretty clear that the important historic spaces are the ground floor and mezzanine, and the large open plan rooms on three of the upper floors. The elevations are of course, unique, and characteristically Lutyens, along with the large chimneys.

Our overall urban design objectives have been to improve the presence of the building to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and to respect and enhance the important features of the Lutyens building.

The Lincoln's Inn Field presence is improved in the following ways:

- Eliminate the unsightly parking lot at the front of the building, and replace with a well landscaped pedestrian courtyard, which comprise the entrance to the hotel, and a stair and lift down to the lower level.
- Study the urban context, particularly of the western side of Lincoln Inn's Fields, and determine the appropriate role for 61. There are two distinct building heights, one characterised by the newly converted LSE building to the south of us, and one by the older listed buildings. The backs of the Kingsway buildings are typically at or above the higher height plane, and tend to create a confused and unattractive presence on Lincoln's

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Inn Fields. 61 is one of the high buildings, but currently suffers from this latter problem. We believe it is better to rebuild the upper part of the elevation, using lower storey heights to reflect the traditional urban pattern, good materials, and a clear aesthetic.

The Kingsway façade is improved by eliminating the mechanical plant room top floor and using this area for inhabited space, and extending the Portland stone up one storey and raising the Copula and Dutch Gable features at either end of the façade up another floor, so they are not lost in the mansard.

The Lutyens building façade at 42 is, of course, retained in every aspect. I think that there is some synergy between our current keenness, for environmental reasons, to have green roofs on urban buildings, the historical fact that this building was built for the publisher of the Garden and Lutyens lifelong concern with landscape architecture. We are very pleased to be able to provide a 'green' landscaped roof terrace, as well as landscaping the forecourt to 61 Lincoln's Inn Fields. There is also an opportunity to design a proper top to the rear half of 42 Kingsway by eliminating the now redundant mechanical plant rooms.

### **The 'Club Quarters' Concept:**

Masterworks develops a private business hotel concept, called Club Quarters™. Club Quarters™ room and suits are of a range of standard sizes but different shape which fit within existing building envelopes. The concept is specifically adapted to work with existing and historic buildings.

Club Quarters™ is now fairly well known in the centre of London. Many of our businesses, charities, government departments and educational institutions are Members. What the members share is a need for clean, well-designed accommodations for the guests, employees and business associates at a low and predictable cost. They also require all the related services needed to support an efficient working life, but not the frills of top end leisure hotels. Other London Club Quarters™ are at 7 Gracechurch Street, 24 Ludgate Hill, and 8 Northumberland Avenue. In addition, there are Club Quarters in city centre locations in Boston, New York (4), Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago (2), Houston, and San Francisco. Characteristics which typify these hotels are that they are in traditional city centers and restored historic buildings. Masterworks, the development arm of the group has enjoyed being a catalyst to successful urban regeneration.

### **The Use of Space:**

On the Lincoln's Inn Fields elevation, we want quiet, pedestrian friendly uses that could benefit from the long views and good light. Since our travelers are independent, often repeat guests and normally working nearby, the great majority arrives on foot from workplaces that are probably only a few minutes' walk away. We do not attract vehicle traffic, and have no coaches. So the entrance to the hotel is on the Lincoln's Inn Field site, through the landscaped piazza.

Kingsway has wide pavements and excellent transport links. It can support vibrant retail uses, though values are compromised by the central dividing barrier located just to the south of our building. The basement areas of 61 Lincoln's Inn Fields are mainly used today for storage and mechanical equipment. There is an opportunity to provide increased employment and a more vibrant streetscape by introducing more retail space at ground and basement levels, using the many existing entrance on the side of the building.

Hotel rooms are the dominant use on the upper floors of 61 Lincoln's Inn Fields to 36-38 Kingsway. All floors of 40-42 Kingsway will be residential apartments with a separate entrance directly from Kingsway. These apartments need to be treated as single open places spaces, with

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kitchens and bathrooms designed as 'furniture' and not carrying on up to the ceiling. We had this same Listed Building challenge in our Northumberland Avenue project, where the high Listed ceilings in the lower floor rooms encouraged a similar and very successful approach.

**Universal Access**

All our projects recognize the needs for universal access, regardless of disability. There is a separate report which outlines our approach for this 61 Lincoln's Inn Fields and 42 Kingsway.

**Sustainability**

Club Quarters has a firm- wide sustainability policy. Our main aims are to reduce embodied energy in our projects, operating energy and to work with sustainable resources. We believe in simple, well managed protocols. All our buildings encourage natural ventilation, and we either manually or automatically turn all mechanical systems off when not in use. Turning equipment off is still by far the best way to save energy. Our projects also score well on sustainability checklists. All current US projects are LEED and all UK projects are BREEEAM certified to high target levels.

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