

Quaker Centre

Design and Access Statement

24 June 2009

Introduction

This statement forms part of a Listed Building Consent application for internal fit out works to an area of the ground floor of Friends House to re plan, refurbish and extend the existing bookshop and café and incorporate a resource area, worship space and space for exhibition. This enhanced facility will be called the Quaker Centre.

The Conservation Plan dated January 2009 prepared by The Architectural History Practice Ltd has been referred to in the preparation of the proposed fit out design and this statement. The London Borough of Camden Conservation department has a copy of this report on file and this should be referred to in conjunction with this application.

A letter is also attached to this Design and Access Statement dated 1 June 2009 from The Architectural History Practice Ltd with their comments on this particular application.

Listed Building Consent for widening the opening between the existing café / bookshop and adjacent office / meeting room area was granted on 5th November 2008 - Application no. 2008/2541 /L.

Existing Building and use

The location of the application is the existing café and bookshop (area EG6), adjacent office and meeting room suite (area EG7) and north corridor (area EG5) on the ground floor north-east corner of Friends House.

Friends House, the London headquarters of the Society of Friends, was designed by the architect Hubert Lidbetter and completed in 1927. The building remains in the use for which it was designed, with some alterations. It was listed as grade II in 1996 and is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Design Proposals

The client body wishes to upgrade the existing café and bookshop area to create a flexible, multi-functional space that accommodates a café, bookshop, resource area and worship space. It is integral to the brief that these areas are as welcoming and accessible as possible and work as a free flowing suite of spaces.

New Widened Structural Opening - The proposal involves widening an existing approved opening in order to link the existing bookshop / café room with the adjacent suite of rooms running east west along the Euston Road frontage currently used as offices and meeting rooms. This will provide much needed scope for each function to expand whilst still remaining linked via the new opening.

New Entrance Screen - It is proposed to re-form the existing entrance stair enclosure providing a clear and direct access from Euston Road. The new glazed entrance screen will allow visitors to see clearly into the new centre. The existing original sliding external doors will remain unaltered and usable to maintain the existing appearance of the Euston Road elevation.

New Worship Space - It is proposed to clear away the existing 1980s partitions subdividing the existing office and meeting room area. The existing ceiling bulkhead housing ventilation ductwork will be minimised within a new suspended ceiling that will serve to rationalise the space. A new

circular Worship Space will be erected within the existing space, but will not damage any existing original fabric.

New Joinery Fittings – The bookshop and resource area will have bookshelf and window desk fittings within the existing openings. Two new glass display cabinets will be installed between the corridor and the bookshop within existing door openings that were originally internal windows.

New Café Servery – A new café servery counter and kitchen workstation will be installed in the same position as the existing servery. All fittings will be detailed as installations and will not damage existing original fabric.

Access Audit

A full Access Audit for the whole building dated 18 June 2009 has been issued. The new design will endeavour to conform to all current DDA 1995 and 2005 regulations. The specific points raised relating to the Quaker Centre area were as follows:

Entrance on Euston Road

- Upgrade signs outside building – positioned by LMH and Quaker Centre to show that step free access is available via garden entrance.
- Step nosings – paint white strips either at top and bottom of stairs or on every step to avoid confusion. Stairs to Quaker centre off Euston Road and steps down to restaurant are a priority.
- Handrails – Improved to be continuous to extend 300mm at top

Generally

- Furniture – Where furniture is arranged, layouts should allow circulation routes 1200mm wide, minimum 900mm between obstacles.