

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		26/06/2009	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		01.06.09	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Victoria Fowlis				2009/1920/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
The Sanskrit Library British Museum Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DG				See decision letter			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Refurbishment of the Sanskrit Library to include removal and alteration to modern partition walls.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant listed building consent					
Application Type:		Listed Building Consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft 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 displayed – no responses. English Heritage – Grant flexible authorisation					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		n/a – internal works only.					

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

Various, none directly relevant to this application.

Relevant policies

UDP 2006 – B6, listed buildings.

Assessment

Alterations are proposed to the Sanskrit Library. This is located at level 2, to the east of the King's Library, and originally formed part of the Long Room, which was built in 1845-50 as book storage. The Long Room has been altered significantly in the intervening time, and only the southern section remains, as the Sanskrit Library. This retains the original iron galleries and iron stairs which gave access to the upper level of book presses. The Conservation Plan highlights the significance of the Sanskrit Library in its close relationship with the early development of the King's Library, and in its retention of original book stacks and galleries.

It is proposed to refurbish the area in order that it be re-occupied as a book storage space with ancillary offices. For the most part the works are minor in nature, laying new floor coverings and undertaking general repair etc. It is proposed to remove a non-original partition in the southernmost section, which is acceptable, and in line with the aspirations of the Conservation Plan. It is proposed to re-open a blocked escape doorway through to the King's Library, which will have no impact on the character of the space.

The existing balustrade height at the upper level walkway is 810mm. As the book presses are being brought back into use, it is proposed to install an additional handrail at a height of 1200mm, in order to safely access the storage. The handrail will take the form of a 40mm diameter timber rail, which will be attached to the existing iron structure using clamps. This is considered to be acceptable as it is a reversible intervention which will not compromise the structure or integrity of the book presses. Visually, it is a simple addition which will not compromise the architectural integrity or character of the room. The use of timber will distinguish the handrail as being a contemporary intervention.

The works proposed will preserve the special interest of this space and are therefore considered to be acceptable.

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