

Planning, Development Control and Environment Department  
London Borough of Camden  
Camden Town Hall  
Argyle Street Entrance  
Euston Road  
London WC1H 8EQ

27 April 2009

Dear Sirs

**TUC Congress House, 23 – 28 Great Russell Street**  
**Listed Building Consent application for Lower Ground Floor refurbishment**

With reference to the above Listed Building Consent application submitted via the Planning Portal, the following is a summary of the proposed work and, where applicable, justification for any proposed alteration to original architectural fabric:

**1. Congress Centre Ground Floor and Lower Ground Floor Receptions**

- Replacement and relocation of reception screens (existing screens installed in 2000) to create more space at the base of the entrance stair. The proposed reception screen will be fixed using the same method as the existing screens, spaced off the floor and ceiling. The brackets at the base are fixed through a 100mm diameter hole cut into the existing Rhodesian teak block floor. The teak disks cut out will be reused to repair the existing holes. The brackets at the top of the screen will be fixed through the existing metal lath and plaster ceiling to the slab above and the ceiling made good. Details of the proposed fixings are shown on drawing no. 151\_A\_10.
- Replacement of freestanding reception desk at Lower Ground Floor level. Replacement of existing reception desk at Ground Floor level (existing desk installed in 2002).
- Upgrade lighting including installation of collars to the existing columns incorporating uplighting to the ceiling and installation of a suspended linear fitting aligned with the centre of the Congress Hall Foyer. The lighting collars will be spaced off the columns by 50mm stainless steel spacer tubes, bolt fixed to the concrete columns and fixing brackets concealed behind the plaster finish. The suspended linear light will be fixed through the existing suspended ceiling onto the structural slab above. Details of the proposed fixings are shown on drawing no. 151\_A\_10.
- Reconfiguration of the existing balustrade behind the reception screen to create a storage area for storage of conference materials (boxes of handouts, name tags etc.) behind. The lower ground floor is very short of storage space, and the area behind the screen is essential to prevent the foyer areas becoming cluttered with stored materials during conferences. Every third baluster of the balustrade is fixed to the slab below through the teak block floor. The intermediate balusters are modern additions. The balustrade will be removed by lifting the block floor locally to access the fixing brackets. The existing floor will be refitted and repaired to match. The existing balustrade will be relocated to the edge of the extended timber floor structure. This process will be reversible, allowing the balustrade to be put back into its original location in the future.

- Removal of the existing veneered panels along the cloak room wall and the support frame behind. Although the original location of the panels is unknown, they may be an original feature of the lower ground floor and were incorporated into the cloak room partition during the 2001 refurbishment. However, the panels are damaged and poorly aligned with the partition behind. The panels do not sit comfortably next to the entrance stair, one of the principle original design features of the building, and certainly detract from the architectural quality of the area. The stair was recently fully refurbished and the replacement of the panels with a clean white wall will restore the architectural setting for the stair and complete the refurbishment.

With reference to the Management Guidelines for Congress House (Arup and Hugh Broughton Architects 2004), Congress Centre Reception is an area of moderate architectural and historic interest, however the desks and screens are modern additions installed 2000-2002.

## **2. Congress Hall Foyer**

- Upgrade the lighting to incorporate uplighting to the ceiling and improve and soften the lighting generally. The existing down lighting in the Hall Foyer creates a very dark ceiling plane and does not present a welcoming environment. Installation of collars to the columns, as described above for the reception, will incorporate uplights to light the ceiling and downlights onto the existing columns.
- The suspended linear light in the reception area (described above) will be continued through the Hall Foyer and the lift lobby beyond. This will stop either side of the existing glass screens, but will appear to continue through the three areas. See above for explanation of fixing detail. The existing fire sounders and smoke detectors will be concealed above the light.

With reference to the Management Guidelines, the Hall Foyer is an area of high architectural and historic interest. We have therefore provided details (at 1:5 scale) of the proposed installations with the application (refer to drawing no. 151\_A\_10).

## **3. Congress Suite meeting rooms**

- The existing poor quality downlighting in the meeting rooms creates a very dark ceiling plane and an unwelcoming environment. The light fittings will be replaced with suspended fittings that will uplight the ceiling. A recess will be formed along the south side of each room with concealed daylight fittings to replicate a natural light source from above.
- Install coloured glass wall cladding panels between columns and doors along the south wall. The panels will be spaced off the wall to allow uplighting to be concealed behind to light the soffit above.

With reference to the Management Guidelines, Congress Suite meeting rooms is an area of low architectural and historic significance. The guidelines state that listed building consent will not be required if the guidelines are followed. However, as the Management Guidelines have not yet been formally accepted by the Council, we have included the proposals with our application.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself, or the architect, Adam Knight, if you have any queries regarding the above.

Yours sincerely

Ian Fellingham  
Project Manager

cc.	Mike Jones	Trades Union Congress
	Adam Knight	Hugh Broughton Architects