

PASSFIELD HALLS: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a Planning and Listed Building Consent application for works to install new and replacement guardrailing to the entire perimeter at parapet level of 3 No. buildings that form Passfield Halls.

The building is currently in use as student Halls of Residence for the London School of Economics. The proposed work is necessary for the School to maintain the roofs of the buildings properly and in accordance with The Work at Height Regulations 2005.

- 1.2 Passfield Halls consists of three buildings; 1 – 7 Endsleigh Place (the main building), 11 – 12 Taviton Street (Taviton annex) and 13 Endsleigh Street (Endsleigh annex).
- 1.3 The buildings are all in the Regency style and were built by the 'master builder', Thomas Cubitt between c.1824 to 1825.
- 1.4 The buildings are all Grade II listed and set within the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area.
- 1.5 The main building is set to the north of Endsleigh Place and the two annex buildings are connected at the rear by a large garden space, which also forms parts of the Halls of Residence.

- 1.6 The buildings were originally designed and built as speculative terraced houses. Externally their appearance and character has been largely retained, with tall stucco pilasters to the principle elevation and continuous cast iron balconies at first floor level, forming impressive frontages to the street.

All three buildings require external repair and maintenance works, including stucco repairs, overhauling of timber doors and windows and the repair and redecoration of cast iron railings; all to match the original design and enhance the buildings' external appearance and longevity. Such works are scheduled to take place in the Summer of 2014, to coincide with the School Calendar.

Internally the buildings have been much altered to accommodate their current use.

2.0 DESIGN

- 2.1 The proposed development to Passfield Halls includes the installation of new and replacement guardrails at roof level to the perimeter of all 3 No. buildings, let into the existing coping stones to the parapets.
- 2.2 The railings are necessary for the LSE to properly maintain the buildings at roof level and in accordance with the Work at Height Regulations 2005.
- 2.3 There are currently existing guardrails let into the coping stones to the front elevations of 2 – 5 Endsleigh Place (main building) and 11 – 12 Taviton Street. Those railings are approximately 40mm in diameter, painted black and in very poor condition, particularly to the Taviton annex, where the railings have completely rusted through. There is evidence of guardrails that have been cut off at low level to the front elevation of Endsleigh Annex, showing strong precedence of guardrails having been previously installed to all 3 buildings.

The proposal intends to remove the existing areas of guardrail to all three buildings, with the exception of the small section to number 4 Endsleigh Place, which is let into the asphalt roof. That section is to be retained, stripped of paint, primed and repainted to match the new railings.

2.4 The design of the new guardrails has largely been determined by:

- The height of the handrail above roof level and spacing of intermediate rails, as determined by the Work at Height Regulations 2005.
- The height of the existing parapet above the gutter level, on which the railings are to be positioned.

The spacing of the balusters has also been designed to relate to the elevations of the existing buildings and also to reasonable lengths of steels to be lifted and fitted into position on site. The railings have been designed in lengths of 3 or 4 balusters, equally paced and measured on site. Refer to elevation drawings 1408 / 050 to 061.

2.5 The new railings would all be out of 32mm solid steel bar; as slender as possible given the spacing of the balusters and thinner than the existing guardrails.

The height of the handrails above the gutter level must be no less than 950mm, with spaces between intermediate rails no greater than 470mm. As such, the railings are generally 800mm above the top of the parapets, with one intermediate rail (refer to elevation drawings).

2.6 The railings are to be let into the existing copings and parapet walls (as per detail 1408/C/001). To prevent further weathering and degradation of the existing parapets, new lead weathering is proposed over the copings to the front and end elevations of the main building.

2.7 The existing black railings are currently rather severe in appearance and stand out against the sky behind. It is proposed that the new railings be painted out in a light grey colour (RAL 7047) so that, coupled with their slender diameter, they disappear visually against the sky.

The specification for painting the steel railings includes hot zinc spraying and undercoating off site, so as to ensure that the steel is well protected from corrosion.

2.8 Maintenance is an important part of upkeeping buildings of this period; as is the safe execution of such work. This has manifested itself throughout the immediate context of Passfield Halls, where a number of other Regency buildings of almost identical appearance have such guardrailing at roof level (for example, 29 – 35 Tavistock Square opposite the main building). By installing bespoke, slender guardrails and painting them a more sympathetic and considered light grey colour, their visual impact on the context would be significantly lower than that of the black guardrailing found on adjacent buildings.

3.0 ACCESS

3.1 The proposal would not have any impact on existing pedestrians or vehicular routes around the site or in the surrounding area.

3.2 The proposal would allow access for maintenance staff and contractors of the LSE to carry out repair works and regular upkeep of the roofs, including clearing the heads of the rainwater pipes and gutters which regularly fill with leaves from the nearby London Plane trees. The proposal would ensure that such personnel could carry out work safely and in accordance with Health & Safety Regulations.

3.3 Access to the roof would be restricted to workers or personnel of the LSE for the purposes of roof and building inspection and related work only.

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