

Holborn Town Hall
195 High Holborn
London WC1V 7BD

Prepared for:
Holborn Town Hall

Issue date: 29/09/2014
Reference: 800(01)400
Revision: A
Status: for building consent

GARNETT
+PARTNERS

Design & Access Statement



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE GROUND AND LOWER GROUND FLOOR LEVELS OF HOLBORN HALL

Holborn Hall is an early 20th century Grade II listed building that was built as the Town Hall and Public Library for the borough of Holborn. The building, with its fine stone façade on *High Holborn* makes a major contribution to the street scene and its equally fine interior spaces reflect the quality of workmanship and design deemed necessary for a significant public building during this period.

In 2003 work was completed on the renovation, conservation and conversion of the building into commercial office units after many years were the building was empty and neglected. The division of the building into self-contained units with the necessary facilities was carried out with the minimum of intervention so that it retained and preserved all the important features and listed spaces. The design of the project, which included the construction of a new office building, *The Connection* and *Dragon Hall community centre* to the rear of the building, was carried out by *Garnett+Partners*, and received a design award from *London Borough of Camden*.

Garnett+Partners have occupied the rear ground office unit and a basement office unit since the completion of the project. The ground floor unit consists of the main, double height Public Meeting Hall of the old town hall, together with the linking corridor from the main entrance hall, and two secondary rooms off the corridor. The basement unit consists of spaces formed in the conversion scheme from old lavatory accommodation and a courtyard at the base of a light well by enclosing it with a rooflight.

Having occupied these spaces for a number of years, we have found that there are aspects of the current layout that make working life in this part of the building difficult. The rectification of these difficulties is the motivation behind the proposals in this application.

The Reasons for the Proposals

1. Since renting the basement unit, as an additional office area, it has not proved to be a viable working arrangement because access between the ground floor and the basement office spaces can only be made by leaving each unit and using the main public stairs of the building, locking and un-locking front doors in the process. As a consequence the basement area has only been used for storage. The proposal therefore is to link the two spaces directly with a small spiral stair.
2. When the building was converted there was no provision, nor requirement, for shower facilities to cater for changing and bathing for cyclists now that there has been the increased use of bikes as a means of transport to work. The proposal therefore is to insert a shower and changing room into the basement.

Proposal 1 – Spiral Stair Link (See drawings Nos. (01)100, (01)101, (01)300, (01)600 & (01)601)

The proposal is to insert a small spiral stair, to link the ground and basement office areas. The stair is shown sited within the bay window area of the corridor at ground floor level. The small diameter stair would be centred on the window, leaving sufficient space to get access to the window for cleaning and ventilation. The stair and its balustrade would be formed in black painted steel. At basement level it would drop into the area adjacent to the space under the roof light and be separated from it by a fully glazed screen and doors (for fire separation reasons). The original terrazzo and marble/terrazzo, diaper patterned floor on the ground floor would be retained. The new opening in the floor for the staircase would be trimmed with a small black marble margin within the existing boarder pattern and have a black painted lining to the depth of the slab. The position of the stair would be carefully centred on the existing floor tile pattern.

Visually the stair would have little impact on the corridor space and would not obscure any of the original features and would be conducive with the areas use as a circulation area. By making the stair and balustrade in black metal this would reflect the metal framed opening lights of the adjacent window and the colours within the existing floor. The glazed fire screen and doors in the basement would be similarly framed in black metal. Additional fire doors would separate the rear storage area of the basement and the other way through to the office area.

This stair would form an “en-suite” facility between the two rear office areas, which would then be similar to the staircase link within the front ground floor office unit of the building which links to the front basement, making the two spaces viable working areas.

Proposal 2 – The Construction of a Shower & Changing Room in the Rear Basement Area (See drawings Nos. (01)100 & (01)600)

In the rear area of the basement unit, (an area with no natural light used for storage) the proposal is to insert a small shower and changing room as shown on the drawings. The room is adjacent to the existing WC for drainage and water connections. This will meet the growing popularity of cycling as a means of transport to work.