



ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONDON OFFICE

Mr Neil Luxton  
London Borough of Camden  
Development Management  
5 Pancras Square  
London  
N1C 4AG

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763  
Direct Fax: 020 7973 3792

Our ref: P00445537

19 February 2015

Dear Mr Luxton

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001, Circular 08/2009 &  
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010  
CONGRESS HOUSE 23-28 GREAT RUSSELL STREET LONDON WC1B 3LN  
Application No 2014/7630/P**


Thank you for your letter of 30 January 2015 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. These proposals include the removal of modern glass cladding to the Conference Hall roof of Grade II\* listed Congress House and the installation of a ETFE canopy over the courtyard space. The refurbishment of the balconies facing Dyott Street is also proposed.

**English Heritage Advice**

English Heritage was pleased to be involved in pre-application discussions regarding these proposals and it is very encouraging that our advice has been addressed in the submitted documentation. We are particularly pleased to see that the original design of the Dyott Street balconies will be retained as part of their refurbishment. Your Council should ensure that the new fabric will match the appearance of the existing as closely as possible. Consideration should be given to carrying out the work to one balcony as a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the new work will accurately reflect the existing.

The most significant intervention proposed is the removal of the modern glass over-cladding to the highly important hexagonal coffered roof, and the installation of a ETFE canopy at a much higher level to create a covered courtyard space. We understand that the lead gutters to the original roof have always leaked and the over-cladding was installed in the 1990s to make the building watertight. The over-cladding has compromised the aesthetic quality of the roof structure and therefore its removal would be a significant enhancement. It has been explained in the submission that correcting the defective guttering would involve significant alteration to the coffered roof, and the canopy is therefore perceived as a more sensitive solution to this problem.

In light of this, English Heritage broadly welcomes the proposal to introduce a canopy structure, which would be installed at a sufficiently high level to retain a sense of

	1 WATERHOUSE SQUARE 138-142 HOLBORN LONDON EC1N 2ST Telephone 020 7973 3000 Facsimile 020 7973 3001 <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk">www.english-heritage.org.uk</a>	
English Heritage is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. All information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to a Freedom of Information request, unless one of the exemptions in the Act applies.		



ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONDON OFFICE

openness within the courtyard. We would encourage a sample of the ETFE to be provided to ensure that the canopy would be as transparent as possible. We also recognise that significant heritage benefits would be secured in the removal of the undesirable modern over-cladding and the black mesh to the Council Chamber. The canopy would also prevent further deterioration to the highly significant Jacob Epstein sculpture in the courtyard which has suffered from water staining over the years. We welcome the intention to enhance the significance of the sculpture by cleaning; however, this should be subject to a full methodology and a trial in a discrete part of the sculpture to ensure that no damage would occur.

We note that no associated listed building consent application has been submitted as part of these proposals and we would normally expect this to be provided for large developments such as this. Therefore your Council should consider requesting a listed building consent application from the applicant.

**Recommendation**

We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again on the application for planning permission. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely




**Alasdair Young**

Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: [alasdair.young@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:alasdair.young@english-heritage.org.uk)

cc Antonia Powell, London Borough of Camden

	1 WATERHOUSE SQUARE 138-142 HOLBORN LONDON EC1N 2ST Telephone 020 7973 3000 Facsimile 020 7973 3001 <a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk">www.english-heritage.org.uk</a>	
English Heritage is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. All information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to a Freedom of Information request, unless one of the exemptions in the Act applies.		