

# Design and Access Statement

## ROOF TERRACES

Weston House Holborn



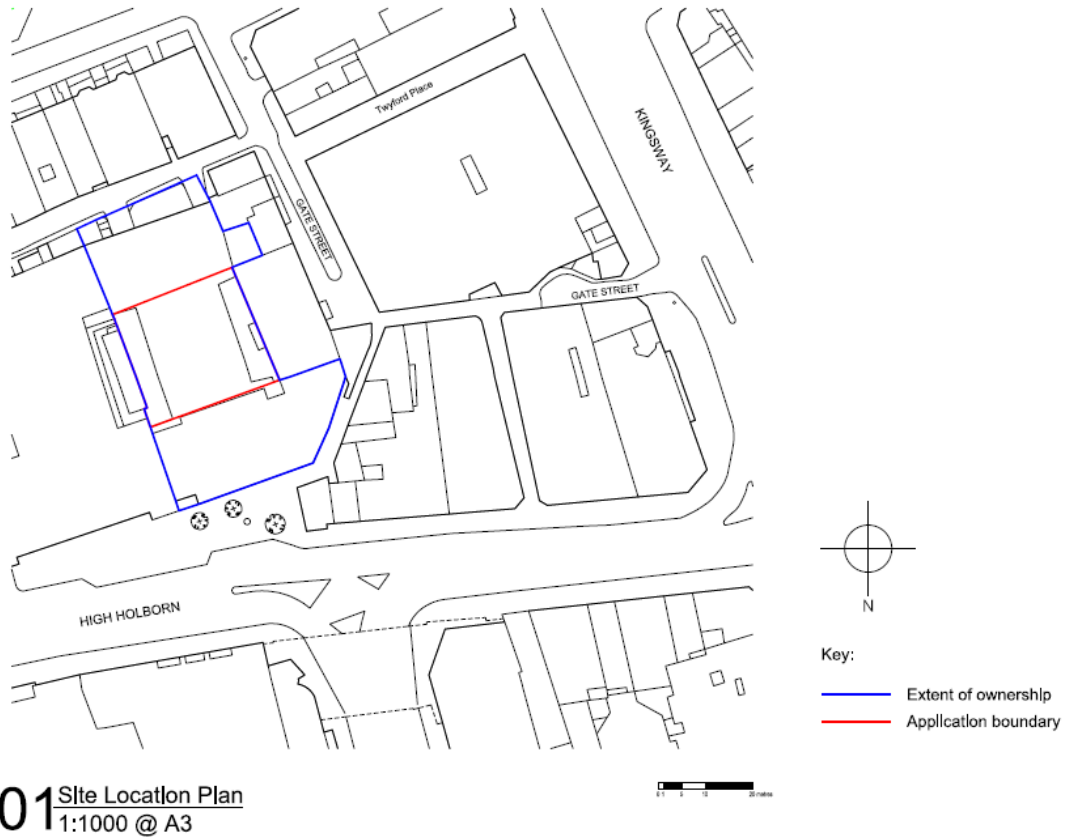
ESA architecture | design  
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Revision\_/\_

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Capita|ESA has been instructed by Frogmore (the client) to prepare architectural design proposals for the existing unused roof terraces and external roof areas of Weston House Holborn, hereby referred to as Weston House/the application site and shown in fig 1.
- 1.2 Frogmore acquired Weston House at 242 Holborn in the late autumn of 2014 and is now undertaking a significant investment in the building committing to a total refresh of the internal spaces, modernised office specification and high quality features throughout.
- 1.3 The overall development will bring a new office space to market and these terraces offer potential tenants a flexible external space for staff and client entertainment. They are a core part of the design approach and an important marketing factor in the development.
- 1.4 Frogmore's design brief for the ROOF TERRACES at 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors is for a new planting, seating, lighting and all new finishes to afford the occupiers of Weston House occasional recreational use of the roof spaces. The roof will be refurbished and renovated to make good all leaks and defects, with new membranes and impervious layers/insulation.
- 1.5 In order to allow full or locally managed office occupier staff access some minor external envelope works will be required.
- 1.6 This will include the installation of 6 no. New doors, the replacement of 6 no. windows, and the decoration of all handrails as well as minor making good of areas of facade and fenestration associated with access to the terraces.



## **2.0 History of site**

- 2.1 Historically the site was occupied by the Holborn Empire, which was as successful as all its predecessors and is remembered as one of the last Variety Theatres in London to have kept the tradition going until its end.
- 2.2 The Theatre active through the war inter war period, but was closed after being bombed in the blitz during the Second World War on the night of the 11th / 12th of May 1941.
- 2.3 Moss Empires bought the Theatre in 1947 with the hope of rebuilding it but the Theatre remained empty and unused until it was finally demolished in 1960 by new owners The Pearl Assurance Company, who built an extension to their offices on the site.
- 2.4 The present building was designed to extend the larger earlier Pearl Assurance Building by H Percy Monkton built between 1910 and 1914, this grand neo-classical building is now a luxury Hotel.

## **3.0 Design Principals; Existing Weston House**

- 3.1 Weston House was an extension and as such is subservient; designed as a simple high quality stone and 'bronze' faced window ribbon block, with clean massing and a muted 'background' facade.

Step backs at upper level on the connecting section were included in the original design thought their design reasoning is not clear.

These created roof terraces and spaces on the roof which are at present either unoccupied or are used for solely cleaning access and plant.

### 3.1 Existing site Photographs



Location of proposed doors onto fourth floor roof terrace, Aerial view looking north, 1 red box = 1 proposed door.



Photograph of existing non-accessible roof and emergency access route



Photograph of existing non-accessible roof



Location of proposed doors onto fourth floor roof terrace, Aerial view looking south, 1 red box = 1 proposed door.



Aerial photograph of sixth floor roof area  
— Sixth floor roof area

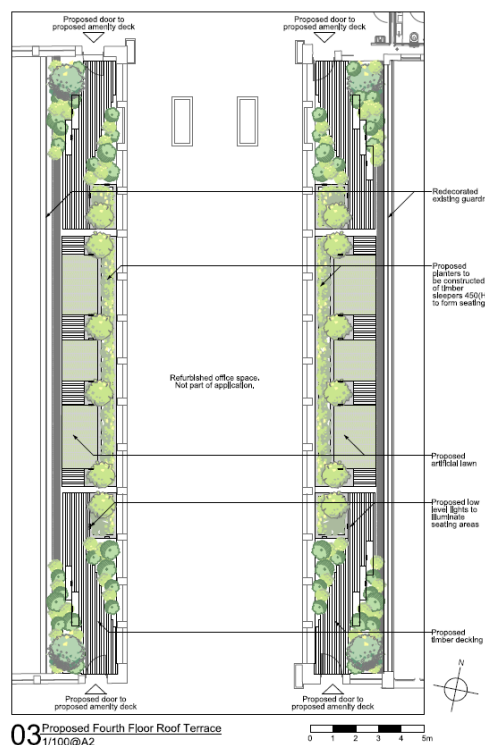
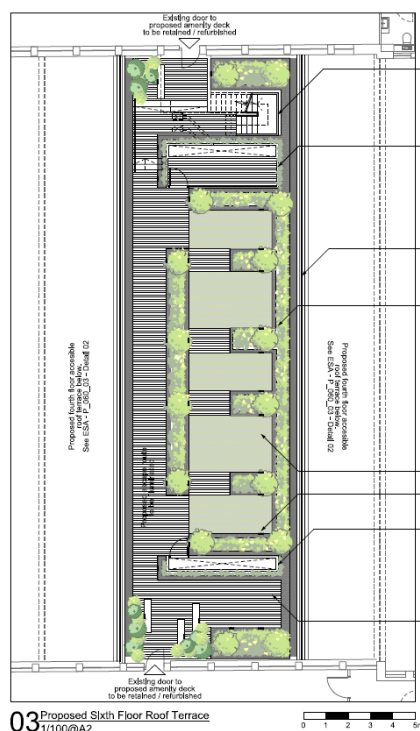
### 3.2 Proposed Roof terraces

The proposal for occupation of these spaces and terraces on floors 4 and 6 is simple and elegant; a series of small external rooms is created with used railway sleepers stacked to make planting beds for small shrubs and low level planting. Planting will create some species diversity and the 'greening' of the city is in line with ambitions for a more sustainable environment and softens a harsh and tired series of roof spaces.

The spaces are carpeted with artificial grass and each has integrated seating on the low level sleeper walls.

The spaces are discreet in scale allowing for staff to take lunch and hold small outdoor meetings.

Lighting is hidden at low level and is unobtrusive.

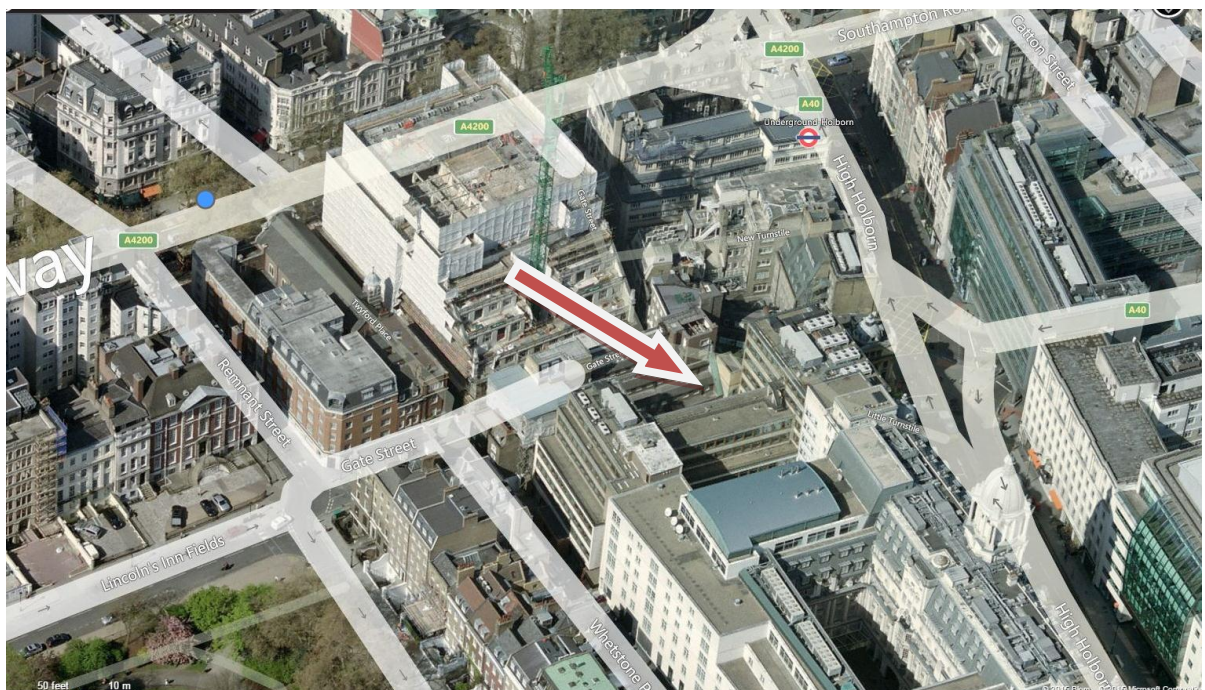




### 3.2 Overlooking

The terrace on both 4th to the eastern side of the scheme and on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor are in part overlooked by the existing Hotel in the former insurance building. The windows overlooking this are used as Hotel rooms and as such the guests in these rooms are transitory residents in nature, and the operating hours of the Hotel room (peak occupation before 8am and after 5pm) will reflect the office hours of peak 9am – 5pm.

The Terraces are overlooked at a distance by other users of Weston House and by some occupiers of office space to both the East and North, with windows of the block/offices between Gate Street, Tyford Place and Kingsway having distant views across the roof of offices on Gate Street which back onto the light well of Weston House.



### **3.3 Visual impact**

The visual impact of the changes will be vastly beneficial with the current roofscape being poor quality paving, gravel and some elements of plant. The proposed improvement to these areas into green occupied roof areas will soften the impact for all users of Weston House and of those overlooking neighbours.

## **4.0 ACCESS + COMPLIANCE**

The existing terraces are used for access to clean windows and to maintain gutters and down pipes for rain water, there is little occupation of these spaces and areas.

Access will be through new doors onto the terraces and access will be limited to those tenants directly associated with the space; i.e. occupying the floors adjacent.

Access for the users of the spaces adjacent who are wheelchair bound or have limited ambulant range will be managed on a case by case basis by the occupier.

### **4.2 Bus Services**

N/A

### **4.3 Train Services**

N/A

### **4.4 Walking and Cycling**

N/A

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

The design proposed is simple and effective making use of the currently under used roof spaces and adding value to the development in a climate where now occupiers are keen to make use of external spaces and offer better more flexible working environments to their staff. The impact of the development of the roof spaces on neighbours will be limited with the improvement to the outlook of those neighbours being of greater value.