

project **Shaftesbury Theatre**

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Proposed Boiler House Design & Access Statement

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1219\_3.0

### 1.0 Introduction

The proposed works comprise the removal of existing roof level plant along the Bloomsbury Street (Shaftesbury Avenue) elevation. The proposed replacement of these existing elements would set new, energy efficient boilers in a 6.0m long by 2.44m wide and high metal container, situated against the party wall of 212 Shaftesbury Avenue.

The Shaftesbury Theatre located at 210 Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2H 8DP in the London Borough of Camden and the located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

This report describes the objectives of the project and the proposed design solution and details relevant discussions with the local planning authority.

The report has been prepared on behalf of the Shaftesbury Theatre by Bennetts Associates Architects.

### 2.0 Site and Context

The Theatre is prominently located on the corner of Bloomsbury Street and High Holborn with a rear façade to Grape Street. Along with the adjacent mansion blocks and offices (King Edward's Mansions, Sovereign House) the theatre forms a complete city block. The corner location and the design of the facades with prominent corner "bell tower" create a strong diagonal relationship with the space in front of the building.

The city block containing the theatre and mansion blocks was created when Shaftesbury Avenue was cut diagonally through the area in the late nineteenth century. The mansion block buildings were completed from 1902-8 with the theatre following in 1911. The entire block is listed Grade II.

The Mansion blocks are five storeys in height plus an attic storey with consistent height and façade treatment around the block from Shaftesbury Avenue round to Grape Street whilst the theatre is generally much lower in scale at around three storeys for most of its perimeter increasing in height for the existing flytower and for the corner bell-tower only. Both buildings are faced in a mixture of terracotta and brick; the mansion blocks are characterised by their strong rhythm of projecting bay windows and corner turrets as well as pronounced horizontal layering of contrasting brick and terracotta detailing.



*Above - View of the Shaftesbury Theatre from Shaftesbury Avenue. Adjacent building Sovereign House located to the left (212 Shaftesbury Avenue), with the prominent Holborn Travelodge shown in the background. The roof of existing plant can just be seen protruding above the existing parapet.*

### **3.0 The Theatre**

The Shaftesbury Theatre was designed by the well-known theatre architect Bertie Crewe and opened in 1911 as the New Princes Theatre. The original seating capacity of 2300 has been gradually decreased to the present 1400 by subsequent re-seating and the replacement of benches with individual seats in the upper tier. The theatre has been in more or less continuous use throughout its history, and was listed in 1974 following a campaign to save a number of London theatres threatened by redevelopment. The theatre has been in the current ownership since 1983 and has become an established venue for large-scale musical theatre.

As well as being very prominent from the corner of Endell Street and High Holborn, the theatre's south and east elevations are prominent when viewed from the east along High Holborn, and from the narrow Grape Street which forms the boundary of the site. The theatre is surrounded by tall buildings including

central St Giles and the Travelodge on High Holborn, as a consequence the building is frequently viewed from above and the proposal takes this into account by unifying the existing services.

#### 4.0 Planning Discussions

Discussions with local planning authority - London Borough of Camden - have taken place at a Pre-Application meeting held 14th October 2015 with Camden officer Charles Rose. Further e-mail correspondence has been made with Camden office Gideon Whittingham.

#### 5.0 Design Proposals



*Above - Existing roof plant above modern extension which forms the Front of House Female WC. Plant and 2no. roof lights to be removed.*

#### 5.1 Form

New boiler plant is to be provided within a single volume which replaces sporadic existing plant with a container measuring 6.0m in length by 2.44m wide and high. The container will stand approximately 2.5m above the existing auditorium roof, with approximately 1.85m protruding above the parapet on the Bloomsbury Street elevation.

However, this protrusion will be minimised by situating the new container approximately 6.2m back from the above mentioned parapet, thus reducing and largely removing any visual impact on the listed building.

The enclosure would be recessed sufficiently away from the Shaftesbury Avenue elevation and alongside a blank party wall with No.212 Shaftesbury Avenue. The proposal would therefore be screened or significantly hidden from public views.



Above - Diagram showing approximate visual impact of proposed container pushed back from parapet edge to minimise appearance from Shaftesbury Avenue.

### 5.2 Structures

Please refer to Michael Jackson Consulting Engineers structural drawings **2470-001C & 2470-002**.

The container will be sat on top of three steel beams, situated just above the current roof level. Two of these steels will be held by stub columns sat on new beams introduced above the existing ceiling level, but below the existing roof build-up of the modern extension which created the Front of House Female WCs. To facilitate this installation a number of concrete pad stones are to be formed in the existing and modern brickwork/blockwork walls inside the WCs with modern plasterboard locally removed to allow access. Following completion of these works all interior plasterboard will be made good.

In addition to the above opening up, 2No. GRP roof lights in the existing roof are to be removed and the openings sealed with new timber joists with bituminous roof membrane covering.

A third steel beam will be provided closest to King Edward Mansions onto which the container will be sat. This beam will be formed by a structural steel A-frame which will sit on top of the existing brick parapet -via plated connections - on the courtyard side of the WC block.

None of the proposed works should have effect on the significant heritage elements of the building.

**5.3 Materials**

Due to the minimal size of the container, and its visibility it is proposed that the containers finish be as neutral as possible. The container will be made of metal and finished in a Dark Grey painted finish in a matt RAL 7043 so as not to distract from either the existing building or the weathered steel extension which is currently under construction.



*Above - Example of corrugated steel painted in Dark Grey Matt RAL 7043 finish.*

Given these undertakings it is suggested that the proposed new boiler house would preserve and enhance the special interest of the Grade II listed buildings as well as the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**6.0 Neighbourly Matters**

A Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is included within the submission. The report's conclusions show that all of the proposed works to the theatres mechanical plant fall within the London Borough of Camden's noise policy.

Please refer to the report for more detailed information.

It is not foreseen that the proposed works should not have any additional negative impacts on the neighbouring properties.

**7.0 Access**

The container will include a galvanised metal walkway, including balustrades, which will provide stepped access from the existing roof level into the new container. Please refer to BA drawing 1219-P-108.

The project does not alter pedestrian or vehicular access to the building from the street.

## **8.0 Application Drawings**

Bennetts Associates Architects

- 1219-P-100 Site Plan
- 1219-P-108 Proposed roof plan
- 1219-P-340 Proposed Shaftesbury Avenue/Bloomsbury Street Elevation
- 1219(SK)122 Proposed boiler house 3D view

Michael Jackson Consulting Chartered Structural Engineers

- 2470-001 RevC Proposed Layouts
- 2470-002 Proposed Details and Sections

Gillieron Scott Acoustic Consultants

- 1219\_2.5\_151118\_GSA Shaftesbury Theatre Environmental Noise Impact Assessment\_RevA