KING'S CROSS STATION

WESTERN RANGE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH FACILITY

HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

January 2016

Prepared by

STRALA
architects

VTEC - King's Cross Station – Western Range Occupational Health Facility

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Cover illustration sourced at National Rail Museum website.
"Watercolour. 'Arrival of Queen Victoria at King's Cross Station' by an unknown artist, possibly Lewis Cubitt, Station's architect, about 1852

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 This Heritage Impact Statement has been produced to support the Listed Building Application for the proposed Occupational Health Facility in the Western Range Buildings at London King's Cross Station by Strzala Architects on behalf of Virgin Trains East Coast.

1.2 The intention of this document is to outline the design proposals and to demonstrate that due consideration has been given to the heritage value of the existing features and appearance of the building, and to preserve the historic character of this Grade 1 Listed Building and its surrounding environment.

1.3 Strzala Architects have been appointed by Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) to design an occupational health facility within the Western Range of King's Cross Station. It is the Client's aspiration that the design provides their staff with a safe, comfortable and pleasant working environment, whilst respecting the historic character of the building that houses them.

1.4 It is the intention of Strazla Architects to provide a facility for the use of VTEC staff that fulfills the Client's requirements whilst preserving all existing historic elements within the areas of the proposed works.

1.5 A description of the existing building condition can be found in sections 3.0 (Existing Photographs) and 5.0 (Current Condition). The proposed works are described in Section 6.0 (Design Statement) of this document.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

2.1 The Station Building

London's King's Cross Station dates back to 1848 when architect Lewis Cubitt designed a railway hub for the Great Northern Railway located to the north of central London. Built by John and William Jay under the direction of George Turnbull, this major terminus opened in 1852 and its design consisted of two large arched train sheds with cream brick structures in Flemish Bond to house offices and ticket sales to the south (façade), west and east. The South façade had a large Italianate clock tower in matching brick. On opening, the ribs of the station arches were constructed in timber but these had to be replaced with iron in 1866 and 1886 respectively. The station originally boasted two platforms (todays platforms 1 & 8) – one platform for arrivals and one platform for departures, but soon after its opening further platforms were added to cope with the increasing passenger demand.

In 1972, British Rail added a single storey extension obscuring the original station façade to house the main passenger concourse and ticket office. This was designed as a temporary structure in a rather utilitarian '70's style with no thought to integrate with the Cubitt building behind, and although 'temporary', this unpopular addition remained for 40 years until it was demolished in 2012 and replaced with 7000m² of Yorkstone and granite paving, creating an open plaza area that reveals and compliments the original façade.

As part of the King's Cross conservation area renovations, John McAslan + Partners designed a new glass and steel Western Concourse to the exterior of the Western Range of station buildings. The centrepiece of the £547m redevelopment is the new vaulted, semi-circular concourse to the west of the existing station. The concourse rises some 20m and spans the full 150m-length of the existing Grade I Listed Western Range, creating a new entrance to the station through the south end of the structure and at mezzanine level to the northern end of the Western Concourse.

The 7,500m² concourse has become Europe's largest single-span station structure, comprising of 16 steel tree form columns that radiate from an expressive, tapered central funnel. The graceful circularity of the concourse echoes the form of the neighbouring Great Northern Hotel, with the ground floor of the hotel providing access to the concourse. The Western Concourse sits adjacent to the façade of the Western Range, clearly revealing the restored brickwork and masonry of the original station.

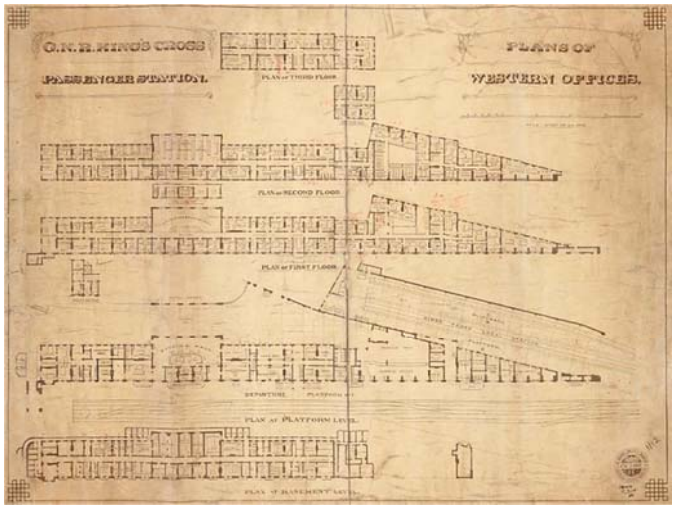
Historic photograph of King' Cross Station sourced at Rail News website

2.2 The Western Range Buildings

The Western Range at King's Cross is the historic station's biggest component approximately 230 metres long by 20 metres at its widest point, and accommodated a wide range of uses. It was originally built to house the station offices and booking hall, constructed over 3 floors plus a basement, in the same brick and style as the Station façade. This part of the Station was the departures area and housed all the necessary administration and commercial activities required by Great Northern Railways.

During the ascendancy of the Modern Movement, King's Cross was frequently cited as an example of proto-modernism and compared favourably with Euston's classicism - "display" as Nikolaus Pevsner described it — and the brilliant, though misguided, mediaevalism of St. Pancras. John Betjeman captured prevailing attitudes in architectural circles towards King's Cross in the 1930s: "…we were all told to admire King's Cross for its functional simplicity, an earnest of the new dawn. We were told to despise St Pancras for its fussiness though we were allowed to admire the engineer's roof."

Cubitt, perhaps because he came from a family of builders and engineers, looked at his job with equal pride but no romanticism. The two arched roofs…are frankly displayed as the predominant motif of the façade…The roof of the clock tower heralds the coming of the new Italian villa ideals. Otherwise one does not look for motifs at King's Cross. The architect was satisfied to depend, as The Builder put it in 1851, 'on the largeness of some of the features, the fitness of the structure for its purpose, and a characteristic expression of that purpose'. **Stuart Durant - VictorianWeb**



Original plans for the Western Offices sourced at Network Rail Archives online

The heritage buildings both west and east of the Station are built with a simple palette of basic materials, typical of their day: brick, timber, cast iron, wrought iron, and - more recently - steel. The individual building reports describe particular instances of their use, and comment on them in relation to function and architecture.

Most of the buildings are constructed with walls of yellow or red stock bricks in Flemish Bond, types very commonly used in the 19th century. The later Western Goods Shed is faced with grey-cream gault bricks from East Anglia. Stronger and more durable Staffordshire Blue (actually dark grey-black) or dark red engineering bricks were used where particular strength or impact resistance was needed, for example under beam bearings or at doorways.

As part of the renovation works, the southern wing ground floor structure has been remodelled to allow the free flow of passengers from the new western concourse to the platforms, and the new Western Concourse structure by McAslan + Partners has been added to the west of the buildings to create a new light and airy passenger area.

2016 Western Concourse / Main Facade
Images sourced at McAslan + Partners website

3.0 LISTED BUILDING ENTRY

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

***Name**: KINGS CROSS STATION*

***List entry Number**: 1078328*

***Location:** KINGS CROSS STATION, EUSTON ROAD*

***County**: Greater London Authority*

***District**: Camden*

***District Type**: London Borough*

***Grade**: I*

***Date first listed**: 10-Jun-1954*

CAMDEN

TQ3083SW EUSTON ROAD 798-1/85/420 (North side) 10/06/54 King's Cross Station

GV I

Railway terminus. 1850-52. By Lewis Cubitt (architect), and Sir William and Joseph Cubitt (engineers). Yellow stock brick. 2 train sheds (originally 1 for arrivals, the other for departure) closed by monumental plain brick screen of 2 glazed semicircular openings, framed with recessed arches (echoing the train sheds behind) with central and flanking towers; ground storey obscured by late C20 additions. Central tower with rectangular clock turret with pyramidical roof, eaves cornice and weather vane. To the west, 3 storey 3 window office block with booking hall and service rooms at rear; 1st floor with thin, debased Venetian windows, cornice at 2nd floor level, 2nd floor segmental-arched sashes (flanking bays tripartite), cornice. On east side, an extension with archway to the cab drive (now bricked up); rusticated surround to arch and quoins; cornice above which 3 tripartite sashes and parapet. INTERIOR: train sheds separated by round-arched brick colonnade. Originally, train shed roofs of laminated wood, inspired by the Crystal Palace, but these rapidly deteriorated and were replaced by the present iron-ribbed roofs to the eastern shed 1869-70, to the western 1886-7. (Laminated wood trusses successfully used at 26 Pancras Road (qv).

HISTORICAL NOTE: when opened as the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, was the largest station in England and is the earliest great London terminus still intact. The contrast of its functional simplicity with St Pancras Station next door (qv) is powerful. (Hunter M and Thorne R: Change at King's Cross: London: -1990: 59-64).

4.0 EXISTING PHOTOGRAPHS

Western Range Platform Side - Author's photograph

Western Range Platform Side – Author's photograph

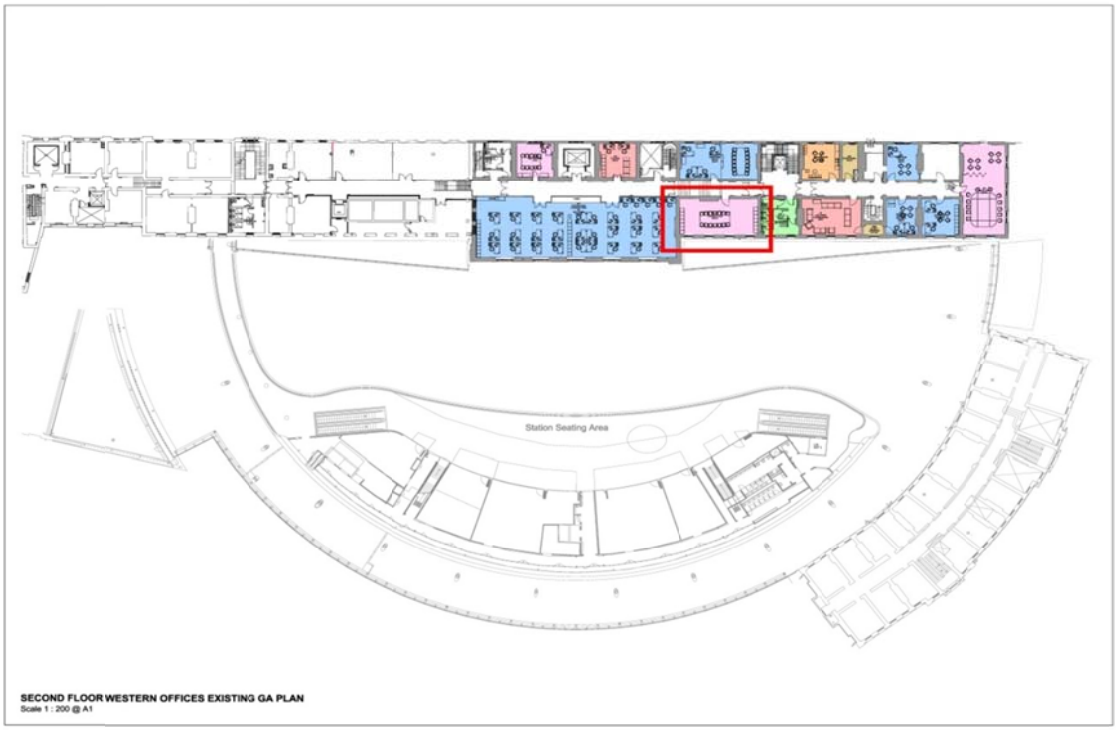
Western Range Platform Side - Author's photograph

Western Range Concourse Side

Room 211 Western Offices – Author's photograph

Room 211 Western Offices – Author's photograph

5.0 CURRENT CONDITION



Western Offices Second Floor Plan Showing Room 211

The proposed location for this project is Room 211 on the Second Floor of the Western Offices. The room is currently used as a training and meeting room by staff of Virgin Trains East Coast and has approximate dimensions of 11655mm x 5885mm with an approximate floor-to-ceiling height of 3740mm. Despite having undergone modernisation works in the past which have obscured or removed some historic elements, a number of the original features remain.

Of the historic elements remaining, the room retains its four Georgian timber, vertical sliding sash windows with heavy period architrave surrounds and wooden panelled wainscoting. There is a picture rail in moulded timber throughout the room and a decorative plaster cornice on all four walls. The room also has an original single timber panelled door with lever handle and architrave to match the window surrounds. The skirting board is an 8" Victorian-type moulded timber to the perimeter of the room. All historic timber elements in the room have been painted with a grey-coloured gloss paint, whilst the cornice, ceiling and walls have a white emulsion paint finish. There are two surface mounted A/C cassettes mounted on the ceiling and lighting is provided by four pendant strip fluorescent lights.

At some stage in the past, a suspended floor was installed to allow the running of services beneath, and there are power and data points in box locations in the floor. This raising of the floor level may have resulted in historic features being removed or hidden – the skirting boards may be of a much higher type, with the lower portion below the new floor, and the door may have been cut down to suit the new floor level. The floor has a grey-blue carpet tile covering.

On the wall that is adjacent to the Second Floor corridor, there is a chimney breast approximately 2800mm wide and projecting approximately 365mm from the wall, running the full-height of the room. There is no remaining evidence of an original fireplace in this room, but it is possible that historically, there was such a feature that has been boxed-in or removed during subsequent renovation works.

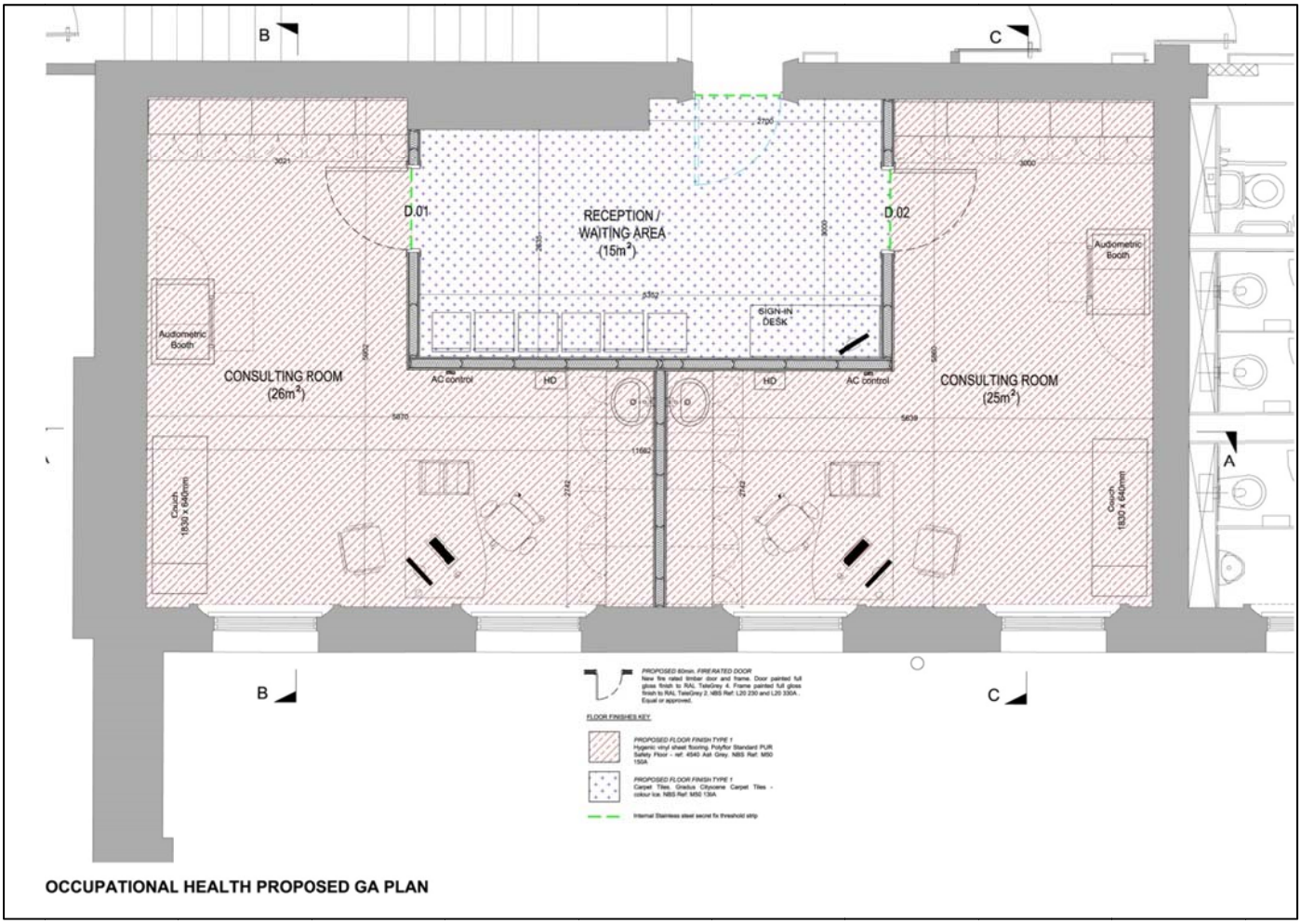
6.0 DESIGN STATEMENT

The scheme proposed is to create an occupational health facility for VTEC within Room 211 on the Second Floor of the Western Range of offices. As outlined in the previous chapter, there are several elements of historical interest within this space as well as more modern interventions, and it is the intention of the design to be sympathetic towards and preserve all these heritage features. The design requires no new structural openings to be made and no alteration to or obscuring of the historic features mentioned in the previous chapter.

6.1 Occupational Health Facility

The Occupational Health Facility aims to provide an on-site comprehensive occupational health service to assist VTEC in promoting physical and psychological well-being and prevent illness and injury arising from work activity. This is achieved by a proactive approach to the management of health in the work environment, advising on the effects of health on work and work on health and basic treatment for VTEC staff.

The Facility provides two consulting rooms each equipped with a couch, desk and chairs and an audiometric booth, as well as necessary storage and washing facilities. The Facility also provides a reception area with sign-in desk and storage.



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROPOSED GA PLAN

6.2 Proposed Construction

- **Walls**

There is no necessity for structural / load-bearing walls in the design.
All walls dividing the existing room will be 60 minute fire-rated partition walls of Gyproc metal stud framed construction with sound insulation for privacy. These partitions are to be finished in plaster on 12.5mm Gyproc Soundbloc plasterboard and 12mm WP plywood and painted in the chosen colours of the Client. All partition walls are to be notched or cut around existing features such as skirting boards, picture rails and coving so as to preserve these elements intact.

- **Flooring**

Two types of flooring material will be used in this design – hygienic non-slip vinyl (Polyflor Standard PUR Safety floor ref. 4540 Ash Grey) with welded joints to all areas with the exception of the Reception/ Waiting area which will have a carpet finish (Gradus Cityscene carpet tiles Ice colour).

- **Ceiling**

Two ceiling types will be utilised in this design – new suspended 600mm grid ceiling system in the consulting rooms, and fire rated plasterboard ceiling in the waiting area.

- **Windows**

The four existing timber sash windows are to remain unmodified.

- **Doors**

The existing entrance door is to be removed and retained for safe storage in its existing condition.
Consulting Room doors are to be standard 60 minute fire-rated internal timber faced doors with appropriate lockable ironmongery. All new doors are to be painted with full gloss finish RAL Telegrey 4 with frames painted to RAL Telegrey 2.

- **Lighting**

The existing fluorescent pendant lighting strips are to be removed and replaced with surface-mounted lighting to adequately illuminate each of the newly-created sub-rooms utilising the existing lighting power points and supply with switching appropriate to the new room layout.

- **Power and Data**

The existing room has floor-mounted data and power boxes fed through a suspended floor. These are to be utilised to provide new power and data points to the required locations within the new rooms. All power and data points are to be floor-mounted to remove the need for mechanical fixing into the existing walls or skirting boards, and any new cabling is to be run under the suspended floor.

- **Ventilation**

The existing A/C cassette is to be relocated to serve the new reception area. Ventilation for the consulting rooms is to be provided through the presence of existing opening sash windows, removing the need for any external penetrations and mechanical ventilation.

- **Water, Waste and Sanitaryware**

The design requires the introduction of two new sinks which will require a potable water supply and waste outlet. A staff toilet and washroom is located adjacent to Room 211 and it is proposed that the new facility utilises the water and waste via pipework located in the ceiling void above the room and operated utilising a single Saniflow unit for both sinks. The sanitaryware is to be of a suitable type, colour and style to be chosen by the Client.

- **Fire Safety Provision**

All partition walls and doors to be 60 minute fire-rated. The design allows for the existing fire safety measures to remain unchanged, subject to a fire risk assessment by VTEC station fire officer.

7.0 Future Proposals for Western Range Buildings

Strzala Architects are also involved with forthcoming works proposed separately from the Occupational Health Facility - these involve Room 212 (opposite Occupational Health) & Room 213 (adjacent to Occupational Health).

The proposed works to Rooms 212 focus upon creating meeting/private spaces within the room currently occupied by a Directors' Office. The proposed works to Room 213 (Badminton Court Room) involve the provision of acoustically isolated private spaces within the existing open-plan room.

These plans are still at the design stage at present and would be submitted as a separate application from the Occupational Health Facility application. Both projects have been designed to be compatible with each other as part of planned improvement works that are sympathetic to the heritage of the building, whilst providing facilities that are fit for purpose for the user.

They are mentioned here to give a fuller picture of forthcoming proposals by Virgin Trains for the Western Range Buildings, and demonstrate that such proposals are co-ordinated to preserve the character of the Building.

Strzala Architects would be happy to discuss the design of both projects with planners to enable the best possible outcome for the various stakeholders involved.

8.0 **Conclusion**

Occupational Health provision is a requirement for the railway industry in relation to Health Surveillance and Sickness Absence Management. Currently, VTEC staff are required to travel to various locations in order to access Occupational Health advice, through the service provider. In order to fulfil the business requirement of OH in house and additionally to support VTEC personnel, having access to the service onsite will impact positively on their overall wellbeing and service delivery due to less travel requirements and availability of Health and Wellbeing team.

The proposed design for this facility has been created with providing the service outlined above to improve the wellbeing of VTEC staff, whilst preserving the remaining historic features present in the room and to ensure that the character of the Western Range of Offices is unaltered. The importance of King's Cross Station as a Grade 1 Listed Building has been a central element of the proposed design and Strzala Architects hope to have kept the character of the original Cubitt design – so far as it is in evidence within Room 211, whilst providing for the requirements of Virgin Trains East Coast.

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