

Swiss Cottage Library PV Installation

Heritage Assessment to support Application for Listed Building
Consent

London Borough of Camden Council

June 2016

ATKINS

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Document History

JOB NUMBER: 5146958			DOCUMENT REF: P:\GBEMF\PDG\PC\Documents\Bse01\5146958 - Swiss Cottage PV Feasibility\04 Statutory\Planning			
Revision	Purpose Description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
A	Issue	JM	LR	DJS	EM	June 2016

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1. Introduction

1.1. General

This statement supports the application for Listed Building Consent for Swiss Cottage Library and the proposed works for the installation of PV panels on the roof.

This statement will briefly review the historical background of the building and assess the impact of the proposed development on the character and setting of the Grade II Listed building.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings and photographs.

1.2. Aim of Heritage Statement

- Set out the historic background of Swiss Cottage Library.
- Highlight the significance of the building.
- Assess the impact of the proposed development on the Listed Building.

1.3. Methodology

The English Heritage statutory register of listed buildings was consulted, and a site visit was made to inspect the building and its context, and photographs were taken.

2. Assessment of Heritage Significance

2.1. Location

The site is centred on the coordinates 51.5423° N, 0.1733° W (Fig.2) and is located near to South Hampstead train station and Swiss Cottage Underground station within the West Hampstead area.

The main entrance of the library is linked to Avenue road by a pedestrian access route. The Library does not fall within a conservation area. (Fig. 1)

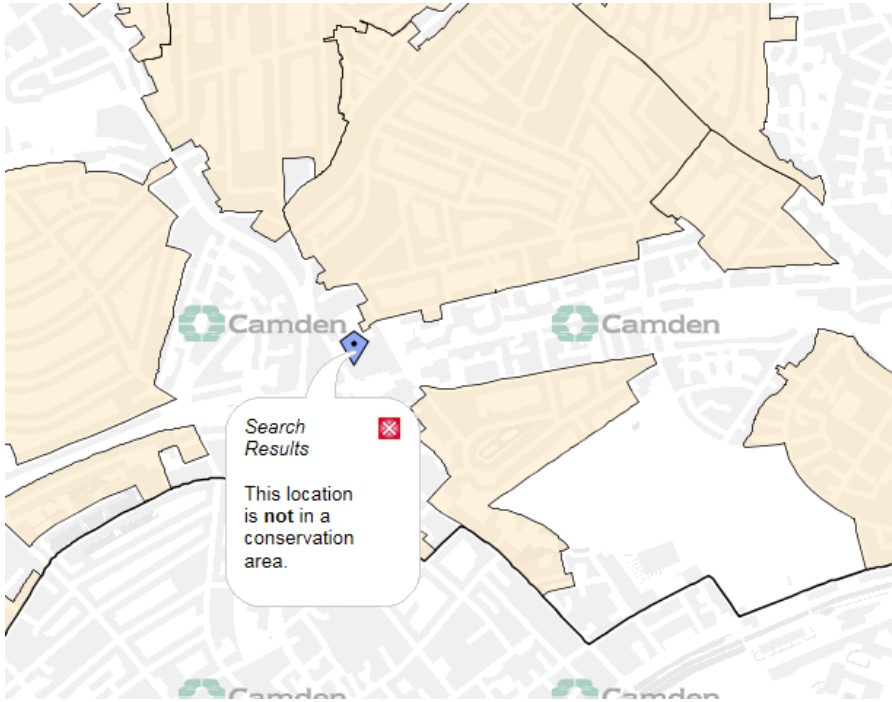


Figure 1: Conservation Area Map

2.2 Historical Development

Swiss Cottage Central Library was first opened in 1964. The centre originally was intended to provide a new Civic Centre for what was then the Metropolitan Borough of Hampstead however with the reorganisation of the government in 1964, only the library and the adjoining swimming pool were built.

On the 2nd December 1997, the original building was Listed Grade II as an architectural landmark building designed by Sir Basil Spence in 1962-64.

The Library has been re-modelled in 2003 as part of a significant complex which includes the Hampstead Theatre and Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre. The primary changes have been to the interior of the building. Framed glazed openings have been introduced at atrium level to increase the sense of accessibility and transparency.¹

As part of the site's redevelopment, art consultants Modus Operandi were appointed to research and write a Public Art Development strategy for the site. This allowed for the artist Laura Ford to create a new tailored space for children within the Library.

¹ Camden.gov.uk. (2016). *Camden Council: Swiss Cottage Library*. [online] Available at: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure/libraries-and-online-learning-centres/swiss-cottage-library/>

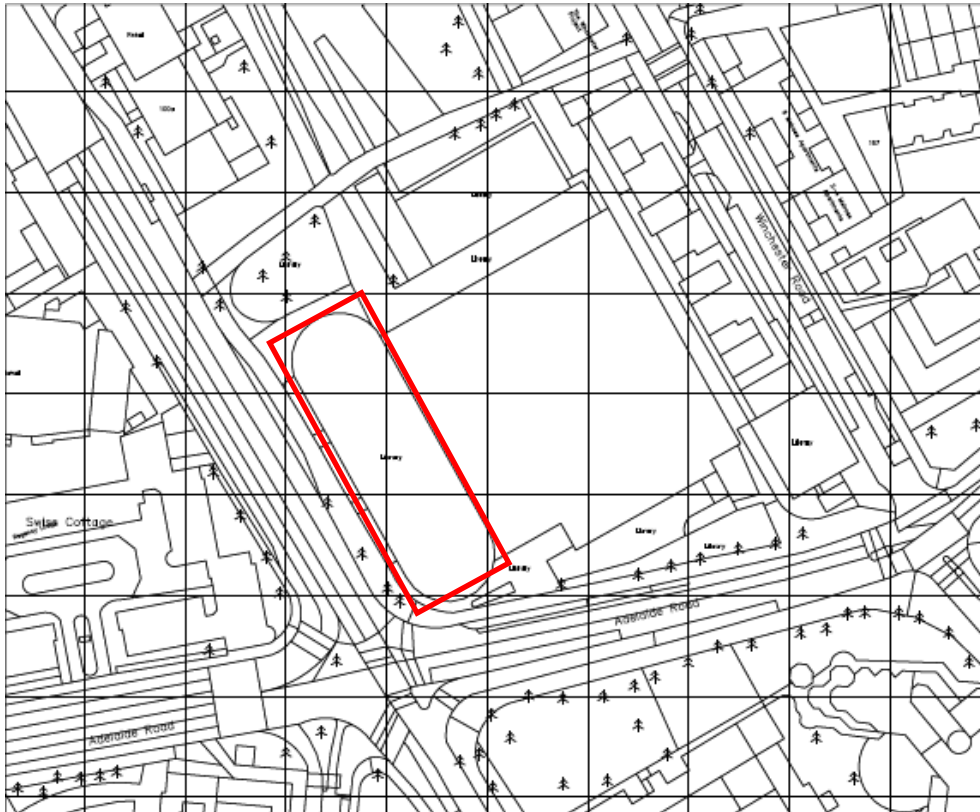


Figure 2: Site Location



Figure 3: Aerial view

2.3 Description of the Library

STATUTORY LISTING

The Library is Grade II Listed.

The Statutory summary for it is as follows:

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

Name: SWISS COTTAGE LIBRARY

List entry Number: **1272259**

MATERIALS: reinforced concrete, asphalt on concrete slab roof.

Public library. 1963-4, for the Borough of Hampstead by Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington and Collins. Reinforced concrete frame on 10' grid clad in pre-cast black basalt concrete spandrel panels between projecting and finely-finished concrete fins with Portland stone aggregate, all set over smooth raised basement and ground floor of Portland stone and concrete - painted. Asphalt on concrete roof slab. The cigar-shaped plan is a complex one, the entrance at ground-floor level on the highest, northern end of the site, the ground floor and basements otherwise housing offices, services and bookstacks, whilst stairs lead to a double-height central foyer at first-floor level. Children's library to side of this; to north and south respectively lending and reference libraries on two levels each with two pairs of spiral stairs to balcony. Music library over children's library on second floor, reached through reference library which also includes work rooms for private study and offices. The projecting fins of Portland stone aggregate at 2'6" intervals are the dominant feature of the building, contrasted with the darker panels in between. Aluminium windows. INTERIOR: aluminium also used extensively internally in the vertical divides to the glazed screens preferred to solid walls through most of the public interiors. This verticality is repeated in the slender steel balustrades to the reference and lending libraries' balcony fronts and internal stairs. White perforated aluminium ceilings with recessed fluorescent light fittings a necessary complement to the extensive use of diffused, borrowed light through the building; terrazzo floors. Original bookcases and fixed desks, the latter notably in reference area; some original signage survives on ground and first floors. Swiss Cottage Library and the adjacent baths were all that were built of an intended new civic centre for Hampstead, the scheme abandoned because of local authority reorganisation in 1965. It is one of Spence's most accomplished civic buildings, and amongst the most ambitious architectural designs for a library found anywhere. (Architects Journal: 29 January 1959; Architects Journal: 25 November 1964; Architect and Building News: 11 November 1964; Opening Brochure of the Queen's Visit: November 1964).

Concrete fins run around the building (Fig. 4&5). Asphalt on concrete roof slab (Fig. 6)



Figure 4: Exterior view, Entrance



Figure 5: North-West Elevation



Figure 6: Asphalt Roof and Surrounding Parapet



Figure 7: View from Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre

2.4 Significance

The original building is considered to be of high significance as it is an architectural landmark building designed by Sir Basil Spence.

3. Proposed development

3.1. Proposed Work

Please refer to the drawings accompanying the application for Listed Building Consent.

The proposed development seeks to provide the Library with a photovoltaic array which will take up most of the free space on the flat roof. Based on an initial structural assessment by Atkins, the proposed number of PV panels is unlikely to increase the overall weight of the roof by more than 15%. If the ballast system pushes the overall weight of the system over this then any installer registered under Part A Competent Person Scheme (CPS) will be able to provide the required support.

Impact of proposals:

Installation of PV Panels	
Impact on historic fabric:	Low
Impact on setting of heritage asset:	Low
Overall impact on significance:	Low
Extent of impact:	Low
Potential heritage benefits:	Neutral

3.2. Mitigation

Particular causes of concern were the Photovoltaic panels would not be able to be seen from street level. It has been recommended that the PV panels are set a metre back from the parapet surrounding the roof. This will ensure that the panels will not be visible from ground level.

4. Conclusion

The proposed installation of PV panels will allow for the Library to incorporate a renewable source of energy to the building. This will not only improve the efficiency of the building however will also improve the economic argument to ensure the future continued use of the building.

It is envisaged that the proposal to install PV panels on the roof will not impact the external façade or original design features of the building. The PV panels will not be seen from street level and will not impact the adjacent surrounding buildings.

