

Trade Union Congress
Proposed Refurbishment - 3rd and 4th Floor Office Areas (inc. WCs)
North and East Wings
Congress House
23-28 Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3LS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (INCORPORATING HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT)

Ref: 689 DAS

Rev. 0

18 July 2016

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared by Harmsen Tilney Shane for the Trades Union Congress and is submitted to LB Camden in support of the proposals to refurbish office areas and associated WCs within the Great Russell Street (North) and Dyott Street (East) wings of the 3rd and 4th floors of Congress House, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

2.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

2.1 Background

The refurbishment works proposed will require only minor alteration to elements of the original building that are deemed have any specific architectural and historical interest.

The main body of the works are restricted to low priority areas and are to be undertaken in compliance with pre-existing guidelines as outlined below.

In 2004, Ove Arup & Partners, in conjunction with Hugh Broughton Architects, produced and published the document "Management Guidelines for Congress House". The objectives of this document were to create a working framework for ongoing maintenance and improvements and to identify areas where works to areas of low architectural and historic significance could potentially be carried out without Listed Building Consent.

This document was not formally accepted by the London Borough of Camden and Listed Building Consent is still required for any alterations within Congress House. However, notwithstanding that, it does still provide a thorough Heritage Assessment of the building for reference for Listed Building Consent applications such as this.

Section 3 of the Management Guidelines contains plans illustrating the level of special architectural and historic interest of all areas of the entire building ranging from low to very high.

(Copies of the plans for Levels 3 & 4 - Drawing no's 69218/03 and 69218/04 - are included with this application)

The following sections describe the areas of the building that will be affected by the proposed refurbishment and explains the level of special architectural and historic interest for the existing building fabric within those areas.

This should be read with reference to the Management Guidelines, a full PDF copy of which is available from Hugh Broughton Architects on request.

2.2 Existing Internal Building Fabric

2.2.1 Significant Areas

Internally, significant spaces such as the Entrance Areas, Congress Hall, the Council Chamber, Meeting Rooms, and most particularly in respect of the current application, the 4th Floor General Secretary's Office Suite are lined with rare hardwoods and veneers and in general have suspended plaster ceilings.

Throughout these areas these finishes remain intact and have in many cases been restored through careful renovation.

These areas are generally of high special architectural and historic interest.

There is NO work to these areas included in this application.

2.2.2 Lift Lobbies

Lift lobbies are generally of moderate special architectural and historic interest.

2.2.2.1 Lift Lobby Walls

The lift shaft walls within the lift lobbies are clad with European oak slats, which have been altered in the past but have generally been restored to their original high quality.

These remain unaltered by the works proposed.

2.2.2.2 Lift Cars

The internal finishes within the lift cars are high quality European oak slats to match the lift lobbies, and these are of high special architectural and historic interest.

These remain unaltered by the works proposed.

2.2.2.3 Lift Lobby Floors

Floors are generally hardwood strip and block, although these have been partially overlaid with carpet to improve the acoustics. The intention is to reveal more of the original flooring within the lobby areas as part of the proposed works.

2.2.3 Office Areas

Office areas have generally been significantly altered and consequently are of low special architectural and historic interest. The Management Guidelines provide design criteria for the refurbishment of the office areas that would not have a negative impact on the building's special architectural and historic interest. The proposed design, layout and materials have been carefully considered to compliment the original building design principles set by David du R Aberdeen

2.2.4 WC s

WC s throughout the building were refurbished in 1996/97. All of the original cubicles and finishes were replaced at that time.

3.0 Design Assessment

The following section is an explanation and justification of the proposed works forming the basis of this application.

The proposed works have been planned in conjunction with the previously referred to “Trades Union Congress - Congress House Management Guidelines – April 2004” (Prepared by Ove Arup & Partners and Hugh Broughton Architects in conjunction with the London Borough of Camden, English Heritage and the Twentieth Century Society and circulated to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee).

The key elements of the guidance are outlined below together with confirmation of compliance of the current proposals with this guidance.

GUIDELINE EXTRACTS:

(Section 3) – APPLICATION OF THE LISTED BUILDING CONSENT GUIDELINES

This Section contains plans on which coloured areas reference the appropriate agreed classification of special architectural and historic interest as follows:

- (3.1) Green Areas – Areas of Low Architectural and Historic Significance
(the majority of the work proposed falls within these areas of the building)
- (3.2) Yellow Areas – Areas of Moderately Special Architectural and Historic Interest
(Only work proposed in this category is that within the 3rd and 4th Floor Lift Lobbies)
- (3.3) Blue Areas – Areas of High Special Architectural and Historic Interest
(There is no work proposed within any of these areas of the building)
- (3.4) Brown Areas – Areas of Very High Special Architectural and Historic Interest.
(There is no work proposed within any of these areas of the building)

(Section 4) - CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

(4.1) Works which Do Not Require Listed Building Consent* (Green Areas)

(*the suggested non-requirement for LBC was NOT subsequently adopted by LB Camden as noted above)

(4.1.1) Re-organisation of office space i.e. the removal or alteration of nonstructural, non-masonry interior office partitions to create open plan or cellular office space is permitted* (*see note above) as long as the following guidelines are followed:

(4.1.1.1) Walls – Internal Office Partitions

New office partitions should be aligned with the window mullions. Under no circumstances should windows be blanked off or subdivided by partitions, which are not located on the natural grid of the building.

(COMPLIED WITH)

New office partitions should be full height and constructed in either studwork lined with plasterboard with a smooth finish or clear or translucent glass (not patterned glass).

(COMPLIED WITH)

Where existing partitions are removed, the walls and ceilings should be made good, flush with adjacent wall or ceiling.

(COMPLIED WITH)

There are no restrictions on the installation of half or three-quarter height demountable partitions in office areas.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.1.2) Skirtings

SUGGESTED SPECIFICATION - Height profile and finish of replacement skirtings should match existing. In office areas these are predominantly plant-on skirtings.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.1.4) Ceilings

Replacement of existing suspended ceilings within office areas and associated circulation spaces. Generally office areas have suspended tile ceilings which are fixed to the underside of the structural slab above.

SUGGESTED SPECIFICATION -

A. Armstrong Dune 600 x 600mm plain white tiles; 15-22mm exposed grid, or similar.

(COMPLIED WITH)

B. British Gypsum MF Suspended Ceiling System or similar.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.1.5) Decorations

SUGGESTED SPECIFICATION - The colour of walls adjoining windows and/or visible from outside the building and painted ceilings generally should be painted col. 'White' ref: 0606R67B. There is no restriction on how internal walls (which cannot be seen from outside) are decorated.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.2) Office Toilets (+ Kitchens. Cleaners Cupboards and Storage Areas)

(4.1.2.1) Partition/Cubicle Walls

SUGGESTED SPECIFICATION –
Cubicles: Amwell 'Truline' system.

(NOT COMPLIED WITH)

Justification:

All of the original cubicles and finishes have been replaced. The last refurbishment to the floors in question was in 1996/97. These are now looking dated and out of place with the refurbished floor areas. The intention is to replace the suggested cubicle system with more appropriate 'full height' partitioning cubicles to modern standards.

Toilets to be arranged so that cubicle partitions, or solid partition walls, are aligned with window mullions.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.2.2) Wall Finishes

SUGGESTED SPECIFICATION - The colour of walls adjoining windows and/or visible from outside the building and painted ceilings generally should be painted col. 'White' ref: 0606R67B. There is no restriction on how internal walls (which cannot be seen from outside) are decorated.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.2.3) Wall Panelling (see Partition/Cubicle Walls)

(4.1.2.4) Ceilings (as 4.1.1.4 - Spec B).

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.2.5) Floors.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.1.2.6) Doors.

(COMPLIED WITH)

(4.2) Works which DO require, and are likely to receive, Listed Building Consent (Yellow Areas)

(4.2.1) Lift Lobbies, Stair Well and Circulation Corridors

No work is being undertaken to the Stair Wells and Circulation Corridors.

Whilst work is being carried out within the Lift Lobbies as indicated on the associated drawings, this is both in line with the stipulations of Sections 4.1.1.1 – 4.1.1.5, and is specifically planned not to affect any structure noted on drawing no's 69218/03 and 69218/04 within Section 3.0 of the document.

In addition, the works proposed are specifically designed to enhance these spaces, reveal more of the original currently concealed floor finishes and increase internal awareness (and usage) of the Dyott Street balconies.

Under these circumstance it is felt that whilst geographically the work is within an area designated as being of moderately special architectural and historic interest, the nature of the work (and given its compliance with the conditions outlined above) is such that it could be deemed not to require an application in and of itself.

- (4.3) Works which REQUIRE Listed Building Consent with appropriate justification and design details (Blue Areas)

There are no proposed works to the areas listed under this section of the document as being of High Special Architectural and Historic Interest

In particular there are no works proposed to the Fourth Floor General Secretary's Office Suite.

(4.4) Works which are UNLIKELY to gain Listed Building Consent (Brown Areas)

There are no proposed works to the areas listed under this section of the document as being examples of alterations which will not be permitted as they would have a significant impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

4.0 Access Statement

The main reception facing Great Russell Street has a fully compliant disabled access ramp and this is the principle access to the building for TUC staff.

Disabled access to the upper floors is maintained through the two lift cores to the North and South end of the building.

The existing fire stairs will be maintained and access to the office floors will continue to be controlled by maglock and swipe access card systems as existing. Disabled refuges will be as existing.

An additional unisex ambulant WC toilet on both floors is to be provided as part of these works enhancing the overall provision and offering improved local accessibility.

Existing fully compliant disabled WC facilities are to be retained in their current locations within the building.

Additional disabled toilets are also under consideration on every second floor on the North side of the building for TUC occupied areas, although these do NOT form part of these proposed works.