

Design and Access Statement [Including
Heritage Statement]

**Tower Entrance Steps Project
Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen
Street, London WC2B 5AZ**

For

United Grand Lodge of England



Advice for the historic environment

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ANNEX I: PHOTOGRAPHS

1 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.1 Purpose of statement

This statement provides essential design and access information relating to the proposal to renew the tower entrance steps at Freemasons' Hall, 60 Great Queen Street, London using matching Portland stone to the existing. The statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant for listed building consent, the United Grand Lodge of England.

1.2 The application site

Freemasons' Hall [NGR: TQ 30470 81244] lies on the south east side of Great Queen Street at the southernmost tip of the London Borough of Camden and on the eastern edge of Covent Garden.

The present day Freemasons' Hall is the third such structure on the site and/or adjoining land, the first being completed in 1775-76. It occupies a substantial part of Sub-Area 2 of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, which, designated in 1971 by the GLC, was the first of the five constituent sub-areas to be recognised as being of special architectural and historic interest in this way.

As the London Borough of Camden's adopted conservation area appraisal of 1999 notes, Great Queen Street was built in the first half of the 17th century, forming a continuation of the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields until the construction of Kingsway in 1905. Its character and built form were shaped by the development of the first Freemasons' Hall, constructed to the design of Thomas Sandby, a watercolour artist-turned-architect, in 1775-76.

The site of today's Freemasons' Hall is of irregular polygonal shape, covering 2.25 acres and is entirely taken up by the Grade II* listed building, designed by architects Ashley & Newman and completed in 1933 [Figure 2]. Its principal entrance, known as and referred to in this application as the tower entrance, occupies the in the south west corner of the site and faces roughly west northwest. The site and building are bordered by Great Queen Street to the north west, Wild Street to the south and Wild Court to the south east.

1.3 Design statement

Existing

Freemasons' Hall is constructed of Portland limestone faced elevations surrounding a steel framed load bearing structure. The tower entrance is formed of 2 giant fluted columns in antis, all in Portland stone. Three shallow Portland steps rise from the public pavement in front of the diagonally aligned entrance to the door opening. The steps are formed of 63mm thick Portland stone, while the 100mm

thick platform at their head is laid out with a 5-pointed star immediately in front of the entrance, which was originally picked out using bronze inlay strips (now missing). A number of the Portland slabs are fractured, worn or otherwise degraded.

As proposed

It is proposed to renew the stone steps and entrance landing using matching Portland stone of identical 63mm (steps) and 100mm (platform) thickness and all other dimensions, maintaining the same pattern of stones, in order to freshen the appearance of this important entrance and make it safe for future users, while respecting and retaining the design intention of Ashley and Newman and the significance of the listed building. The missing bronze inlay strips to the 5-pointed incised star will be replaced to match and so reinstate the original design.

The replacement Portland stone will be selected from the Jordans Whitbed seam, which is the closest match for shell banding, colour and textural appearance to the stone originally used on the entrance steps. Joints will be filled and finished with NHL 3.5 mortar.

1.4 Technical requirements and standards

All works are to be undertaken in accordance with Building Regulations and British Standards. Material and workmanship will reflect best conservation practice and the application includes a method statement setting out how this will be achieved.

1.5 Use and layout

The project will not result in any change to the use of the building or the layout of the entrance.

1.6 Landscaping issues

There are no additional landscaping proposals or implications arising from or associated with this application.

1.7 Access issues

On completion of the project, existing access arrangements into the building will continue unaffected and as existing. During the course of the implementation of the works, day to day access into the building will continue to use entrances on the north east Great Queen Street elevation.

2 HERITAGE STATEMENT

2.1 Freemasons' Hall

2.1.1 Outline history

In 1774, the Moderns' Grand Lodge bought a house on the south eastern side of Great Queen Street, with a garden and further house behind, for the purpose of erecting the first Freemasons' Hall to the rear of the plot. Until then, the Grand Lodge had been forced to meet in Livery Company halls and rooms or in various local taverns. Designed by Thomas Sandby, the new building was opened with great ceremony on 23rd May 1776, while the front house was subsequently converted as the Freemason's Tavern in 1786. In addition to its Masonic use, the Hall rapidly became an important venue for London Society, hosting concerts, balls, plays, literary evenings and meetings during the Season. In 1815, Sir John Soane purchased and gave additional land occupied by two adjoining houses and on which he designed and by 1820 had built a further hall, standing alongside Sandby's, providing much needed extra accommodation.

The second Freemasons' Hall was designed by Frederick Cockerell and was completed in 1869 [Map 2]. It replaced everything on the Great Queen Street site except Sandby's original structure, which was retained and incorporated as a secondary hall, before being damaged by a serious fire in 1883. Cockerell's building – termed a 'showy pile' by the respected architectural historian, Professor James Stevens Curl - had a severe and heavy classical feel, much enriched with symbolic sculptures by William Nicholl (renowned for his work on the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (1848) and St George's Hall, Liverpool (1854)). However, with the burgeoning growth of Masonic membership in the last quarter of the 19th century, accommodation in the second Freemasons' Hall rapidly came under pressure. Extensions to the Hall were built in 1906 (designed by H L Florence and Brown and Barrow), 1910 and 1915/16 (Brown and Barrow), but the pressure continued unabated. As Calderwood (2013) noted:

'The [later] Victorian age...had witnessed a constant struggle between the accommodation needs of the growing body of London freemasons and the inadequate capacity of Freemasons' Hall in Great Queen Street. During the nineteenth century, several attempts were made to resolve this tension, but with no more than short term success. Thus, the rebuilding of the Hall between 1864 and 1869 and its enlargement in 1899 and again in 1910 proved to be no match for the growth of the masonic population meeting in the capital. In 1919, a bold plan was announced for a new building which would be a marriage between the need for more accommodation and the desire to commemorate those who had died in the First World War.'

[...]

The insufficiency of masonic accommodation in Great Queen Street was further highlighted in 1920 at the annual festival of UGLE, when the Grand Master observed that 'The scene they had witnessed that evening when from two to three hundred had been turned away because of the inability to find room was proof of the necessity for such a home. Additional proof was seen when

the choice of site for the new building was debated in Grand Lodge and the attendance was so large that the meeting had to be moved to the nearby Kingsway Hall.'

The 1919 'bold plan' by the Grand Master, HRH Duke of Connaught, was to create a new building that would 'provide adequate central headquarters for the Craft' and would be able to accommodate 2,000 Masons rather than the 720 of Cockerell's second Hall. It would form 'a perpetual memorial...to honour the many brethren [it is now known, numbering 3,225] who fell during the war'. A campaign aiming to raise £1 million in subscriptions for the proposed Masonic Peace Memorial was established in January 1920. In December 1922, the Times, along with other national and local newspapers, reported on the decision taken by Grand Lodge about the site for the new building – the extended Great Queen Street site being chosen over another in Adelphi 'facing the river [and] regarded as being the finest available in London at the present time', which would have cost another £300,000 to £350,000 to develop over and above the £1 million estimate for the Great Queen Street site.

An open international architectural competition was held in 1925, attracting 110 entries. These sketch designs were whittled down by a small judging committee chaired by Sir Edwin Lutyens to a shortlist of ten architectural practices for a second limited (and paid) competition of 'elaborate sets of [worked up] drawings', run early in 1926. The June 1926 edition of the 'Architect and Building News' reported in detail on the submitted designs, which were exhibited at the RIBA, commenting critically that only two (including the selected winner) were 'planned even approximately on the same lines, while the remaining schemes exhibit the greatest degree of diversity conceivable and resemble each other only in the negative quality of differing in most essential particulars from the design which was placed first'.

The article is useful in explaining the brief for this, the third Freemasons' Hall for the Great Queen Street site, for otherwise this does not appear to survive in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry or elsewhere in the public domain. The ten competing designs were required to provide:

'...a great meeting hall or temple. In association with this were to be administrative and executive rooms, Grand and Past Grand Officers' Rooms and offices of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. Besides a number of smaller lodge rooms, there were to be a library, museum, reading and writing rooms for visitors from the provinces and overseas. In addition, there was to be a licensed restaurant, to replace the existing Connaught Rooms and Mark Masons' Hall.'

The winning design, again chosen by Lutyens' judging panel, was submitted by the London based architectural practice of H V Ashley and Winton Newman. Ashley & Newman established their partnership in 1907. Their first major commission was an extension to the Council House in Birmingham, a competition won in 1907 although the extension was not completed until 1919. By the time they won the Masonic Peace Memorial competition in 1926, they had also designed and seen built an extension to Birmingham's Art Gallery and Museum (completed 1917), the out-patients' department for the Royal Free Hospital (1914), significant new housing commissions in Hampstead and Totteridge (1913-14), Clive House (the Passport Office) in Petty France (c1925), London and Cheltenham Technical College, and Schomberg House between Page Street and Vincent Street, Westminster (1926).

As the Architect and Building News article tartly, but correctly, identified, Ashley & Newman had the advantage (along with the designer of the second entry '*planned even approximately on the same lines*') of themselves being Masons and therefore had '*an intimate acquaintance with the needs of their own institution*'. Despite this carping, the writer of the article acknowledged that '*Messrs Ashley and Winton Newman have been fortunate enough to provide for these needs in a more convenient and economical manner than the other competitors*' and '*...the fact remains that their scheme was far the best when judged on purely architectural grounds and they are to be heartily congratulated upon a very fine achievement*'.

In reality, the irregular polygonal shape of the extended development site made fulfilment of the brief in a suitably resonant piece of architecture very challenging and, in this respect, the analysis provided by the contemporary article is very useful:

'Most of us who ourselves have in the past entered for architectural competitions in which practical requirements were complex and exacting will have every sympathy with the architects who have prepared schemes for the new Masonic Peace Memorial and will realise that some of the aesthetic problems put forward were as nearly insoluble as any such problems can be...The two most important things about this building are that it contains a large hall or temple and that it is designed for the use and meeting place of a secret society [as UGLE was regarded at the time]...

[...]

...In the case of the design placed first [that is, that of Ashley & Newman], what must have influenced the assessors in no small degree is the fact that the architects grasped a very important fact, namely, that the corner between Great Queen Street and Wild Street presented the only opportunity for a great architectural display. It so happens that neither Great Queen Street nor Wild Street are of sufficient width to enable a really good view to be obtained of a very long façade. On the other hand, the above-mentioned corner is being opened up to view from Long Acre as the block of buildings at the corner of Drury Lane and Wild Street is due to be removed. Consequently, it was a masterly stroke on the part of Messrs Ashley and Winton Newman to put their great tower or cupola in this position. When once the maximum note of emphasis was placed on this point the main disposition of the [internal] plan followed therefore, for with the main entrance at this corner it seemed a fairly logical procedure to make the main access of the temple on the line bisecting the angle between these two streets, so that from the entrance portal one should proceed straight to the main chamber of the building with subsidiary apartments arranged symmetrically on either side of it. But having, with good reason, adopted such a scheme it follows immediately that the temple itself was as it were buried from view and could on no account receive external expression...To a certain extent, therefore, the design suffers on this account, but there is no doubt that the practical convenience which resulted from the central position of the temple and the extremely skillful planning of the rooms adjacent to it were well worth the sacrifice of architectural expression.'

The foundation stone weighing almost two tons was laid by the Duke of Connaught on 14th July 1927 by 'synchronisation', using an electrically operated model of a crane from the stage of the Royal Albert

Hall. Demolition of some of the existing houses on the newly acquired section of the site commenced soon afterwards and was followed in July 1928 by the commencement of a 'vast' foundations contract let to Messrs Holloway Bros for £71,000. Once this was complete, the main building contract was let to contractor, Sir Walter Lawrence of Finsbury Square for £637,000 and work commenced in October 1928. According to national and local newspaper articles at the time:

'The memorial will be finished in Portland stone in a restrained and dignified style, combining the beauty of the classic tendency with the needs of modern utility in the elevation.

[...]

The memorial will be notably British as regards the material which we are using in its construction.

Practically the whole of the wood will be from British Empire trees. There will be Australian and Tasmanian oak, English oak, Honduras mahogany, as well as laurel wood, teak, 'silver grey' and padauk from India.

Five thousand tons of British steel, 6000 tons of British cement, 75,000 cubic feet of British [Portland] stone, and 5,000,000 bricks will be needed for the structure.

We shall be employing 800 men altogether on the work...'

This was, of course, a major building project being announced just as the global economy was about to be shattered by the Wall Street Crash that month and the ensuing Great Depression, although the importance of that could not have been foreseen at the time.

Sandby's badly fire damaged Hall was demolished in 1930, as construction progressed, and by the time the Masonic Peace Memorial was complete, of Cockerell's second Freemasons' Hall, only part of the façade together with the former tavern portion remained – both today being part of the Connaught Rooms.

The building, which in total cost in the region of £1,300,000, was dedicated by the Duke of Connaught on 19th July 1933, although it had been in use for many months. It remained known as the Masonic Peace Memorial until the outbreak of war in 1939, when its name reverted to Freemasons' Hall.

2.1.2 Description

A London Open House leaflet has helpfully set out a reasonably detailed description of the building:

'The building is constructed on a steel frame and faced with Portland stone. The principal ceremonial rooms are located on the first floor. Three vestibules form a ceremonial approach to the Grand Temple and are of increasing richness in architectural treatment and design.

In the Second Vestibule there are displays about Freemasonry and further information about the history of the site and this building. The First Vestibule lies above the ceremonial entrance to the building below the tower at the junction of Great Queen Street and Wild Street. The stained glass

windows on either side represent the six days of the Creation. On one side these are shown with the five orders of architecture and on the other side with five Masonic symbols.

The Shrine was designed by Walter Gilbert (1871-1946). In bronze, its design and ornamentation incorporate symbols connected with the theme of peace and the attainment of eternal life. It is in the form of a bronze casket resting on a boat amongst reeds; the boat is indicative of a journey which has come to an end. In the centre of the front panel a relief shows the Hand of God set in a circle in which rests the Soul of Man.

At the four corners of the Shrine stand pairs of winged Seraphim carrying golden trumpets and across the front are four gilded figures portraying (from left to right) Moses the Law Giver, Joshua the Warrior Priest, Solomon the Wise and St George.

The Roll of Honour of the 1914-1918 War is guarded by kneeling figures representing the four fighting services (Navy, Army, Royal Marines & Royal Flying Corps). The bronze Pillars of Light flanking the Shrine are decorated with wheat (for resurrection), lotus (for the waters of life) and irises (for eternal life). At the base of each pillar there are four panels of oak leaves.

The theme of the stained glass over the Shrine is the attainment of Peace through Sacrifice. The figure of Peace is holding a model of the Tower façade. Fighting men and civilians are shown in the lower windows ascending a winding staircase until they arrive with the pilgrims through the ages at the feet of the Angel of Peace.

In the ante chamber to the Grand Temple (the Third Vestibule) the pattern of the richly coloured ceiling painted with gold is echoed in the elaborate floor pattern executed in marble and mosaic. The central multi-pointed star is inlaid with lapis lazuli. The four blue panels represent heaven and the rose in each corner reflects the connection between England and Freemasonry (the Grand Lodge of 1717 formed in London was the first Grand Lodge in the world).

The Grand Temple is at the centre of the site but the design and use of internal courtyards is such that it has external walls on three sides. The Temple is 120 ft long by 90 ft wide by 62 ft high, and holds approximately 1700 people including balcony seating. On ceremonial occasions access to the Temple is via the bronze doors, the design of which incorporates historical and symbolic themes. The walls of the Temple are lined with various types of marble.

The central panel of the ceiling is a representation of the celestial sky. Surrounding it is a deeply coffered and richly decorated border with the arms of the United Grand Lodge of England at each corner. The decoration of the cornice, which is 15 ft deep, is entirely in mosaic and took 22 months to complete. The allegorical groups in the design each incorporate columns of a classical order of architecture.

On the eastern side (opposite the bronze doors) in between two Ionic pillars (representing Wisdom) is a representation of the Ark of the Covenant and Jacob's Ladder. Resting against the Ladder is the Volume of Sacred Law (any holy book displayed at a lodge meeting). Jacob's Ladder bears the symbols for Faith (a cross), Hope (an anchor) and Charity (a burning heart), ascending

towards the Hebrew character of YOD (Jehovah). To the left stands King Solomon, to the right King Hiram, the builders of the first Temple at Jerusalem.

On the western side (above the bronze doors) two Doric pillars (representing strength of knowledge) are flanked by Euclid and Pythagoras on either side of the 47th Proposition (the symbol worn by a Past Master of a Lodge). The pillars support the Moon around which is an ancient symbol of wisdom, the serpent.

On the Southern side are two Corinthian pillars (representing beauty) with Helios, the Sun God, driving his chariot across the heavens to mark the Sun at its meridian. The pillars support the All-Seeing Eye below which is a five pointed star.

On the Northern side between the two pillars of the Composite order are the arms of the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn (Grand Master when this Hall was built). On one side is St George and on the other the Dragon. The celestial globe on one pillar and the terrestrial globe on the other represent the universal nature of Freemasonry. At the base of the pillars are two blocks of stone (ashlars). One is rough representing Man entering Freemasonry and the other is smooth representing how Man is improved through Freemasonry.

In the corners of the cornice stand four angelic figures portraying the four cardinal virtues Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice. The inscription commences in the north east corner and is taken from Chronicles I xvii 12-14. The frieze on the four splay walls carries the twelve signs of the Zodiac. These have no Masonic significance but are a link with the first Freemasons' Hall on this site which featured them in its decoration.

The organ console is situated in the centre at the end of the dais. The organ is a three manual Willis instrument with over 2000 speaking pipes.

The Library and Museum of Freemasonry houses one of the leading collections of Masonic artefacts and books and is open to the public.'

Despite the masonic emblems explained in the foregoing, as Curl notes in his paper on 'Freemasonry and Architecture' in the 'Handbook of Freemasonry' (edited by Bogdan and Snoek (2014)), '*apart from a few allusions, [the building's] 'masonic' aspects are subtle*'. Generally, the building externally is seen as pared down, dignified classicism. As already mentioned, the building has long facades, emphasised in its external detailing, and culminates across the west angle in its corner tower, which echoes the form of the Temple entrance beneath. The effect defies the diagonal axis the Temple is set on, as well as its processional access route. In his Buildings of England series, the notable architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner called this exterior, '*...bewilderingly self-possessed...with a corner erection like the Port of London Authority and all the detail in a kind of classical revival*'.

The fine detailing of the interior is markedly Art Deco influenced, with symmetry and balance of design. It is generally held to be the only Art Deco major building interior in London that remains substantively 'as built' and in use for its original purpose. The importance of the interior's symbolism of peace is of great importance and is well explained in Saunders and Cornish's 2009 'Contested Objects – Material Memorials of the First World War':

'The single largest, most impressive and enduring of the many Masonic artefacts which can be judged material legacies of the Great War is the Freemasons' Hall, funded entirely from members' subscriptions, in exchange for which...a medal or jewel was produced...Over 53,000 of these jewels were issued, and they became a strong visual indicator of the fundraising appeal for the lifetime of their owners...

[...]

The symbolic importance of the peace memorial at the time may be judged by the fact that King George V, although not himself a freemason, kept a model of the tower on his writing desk until his death.

Elements of war and remembrance are incorporated into key parts of the building's fabric. The architectural space of the main ceremonial rooms begins with an area termed 'the shrine', whose focal point is the casket for the scroll of remembrance. This takes the form of a biblical reed boat which incorporates Masonic and nationalistic imagery: at each corner kneels a figure representing one of the forces...The panels are filled with foliage of plants that grow in Flanders – a reference to the landscape of this particularly bloody battle zone of the Great War. The main stained glass window of the shrine area shows pilgrims ascending to their rest, including soldiers from the war...The bronze cast doors of the main temple also feature two soldiers as emblems of the virtue of sacrifice among the otherwise classical iconography...'

Over recent years, the Grand Temple, just as with Sandby's Hall, has increasingly been used for non-Masonic events such as concerts and musical theatre – having an almost perfect acoustic and clear sight-lines.

2.1.3 The building since completion in 1933

Freemasons' Hall continues to be used for its original purpose. It has been maintained to a very high standard since completion and, as a visit to the building powerfully demonstrates, its management has always focused on best practice care rather than 'economical' maintenance.

With the knowledge, approval, and where necessary consent of London Borough of Camden, in recent years, significant investment has been made in combating and repairing the effects of progressive corrosion in the building's structural steel frame. Allied to this, two vertical light-wells have been infilled and incorporated into the accommodation, creating additional space at each floor level. Recently, a lavatory at first floor level (not originally one of the formal toilets) has been refurbished and extended into the adjacent infilled light-well in order to create additional toilet facilities, for use by male and female visitors. This reflects an important management responsibility – namely, ensuring that the building remains suitable for its present day use and future demands. The Ashley and Newman design did not incorporate female WCs: today, the building is used by many thousands of women every year.

The management challenge facing the UGLE Board is not only to maintain Freemasons' Hall's built fabric, but also to adapt it to meet the needs of Freemasonry in the 21st Century, while maintaining and enhancing its suitability for non-Masonic functions, including international fashion shows, use as

a film set and a multitude of other events that now represent an ever-increasing demand and a vital income generator, assisting in safeguarding the designated heritage asset and its significance for future generations. The recently consented and completed new Museum Gallery within the building is a good example of the changing need which UGLE is committed to managing, while retaining the building's important original use.

2.2 Designations

From a heritage perspective, built and other assets in the environment are either heritage assets or ordinary assets. Those that are classified as heritage assets may be designated (for example, a listed building or conservation area) or non-designated.

Freemasons' Hall is a designated heritage asset, being Grade II* listed on 9th March 1982. The list description for the asset (list entry 1113218) reads:

'Central headquarters of English Freemasonry. 1927-33. By HV Ashley and Winton Newman, whose ingenious fitting of the plan to the irregular. polygonal site won them the commission as the result of a competition. Steel frame construction faced with Portland stone. Massive building in stripped Classical style. Long facades (with slightly projecting entrance bays) emphasised by string courses and heavy cornice above 1st floor. 2 attics stepped above, culminating across the west angle in the corner tower, which echoes the form of the Temple entrance beneath, flanked by 2 giant fluted columns in antis. This defines the diagonal axis along which the Temple itself lies, as well as its associated processional access route. Metal-framed windows. Decorative lamp brackets. INTERIOR: principal halls, meeting rooms and staircases all marble lined, richly detailed but austere neo-Grecian in pattern. Set on diagonal axis. Grand entrance hall and museum collection on ground floor. The principal rooms on the first floor, with Grand Temple, Grand Officers' rooms, library and reading room. Grand Temple of double height with gallery, dias and organ. Walls lined with Ashburton and Botticino marbles, surmounted by cove decorated with mosaics, coffered and decorated ceiling. Bronze doors in neo-Egyptian style by Walter and Donald Gilbert. Boardroom panelled in hardwood, and with stained glass. Fine bronze and wrought-iron work throughout the building. HISTORICAL NOTE: built as the "Masonic Peace Memorial Building" and a memorial to Freemasons killed in World War I.'

As previously mentioned, the listed building lies within the designated Seven Dials Conservation Area.

2.3 Assessment of significance

2.3.1 Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework defines significance as being:

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

In this section, the significance of Freemasons' Hall will be considered in terms of appreciable historical, architectural, archaeological, and/or artistic interest.

2.3.2 Freemasons' Hall

The description of the building and the story of its development, as described above indicates that its primary significance can be summarised as lying in the following:

- It constitutes the latest in a 240-year progression of important Masonic buildings on the same site, representing a fundamental and highly important continuity of ownership and use in this central London site.
- The building dominates Great Queen Street and Wild Street and influences profoundly the present day character and built form of this sub-zone of the Seven Dials Conservation Area.
- It is a landmark and focal point structure within the local built environment, providing critical visual closure to the view eastwards along Long Acre from the Bow Street/Endell Street junction.
- Freemasons' Hall is the central headquarters of the United Grand Lodge of England, an organisation of long standing influence within British society.
- The building has had extensive associations with people of historical note and influence from completion in 1933 to the present day.
- The building has been identified as the *'single largest, most impressive and enduring of the many Masonic artefacts which can be judged material legacies of the Great War'*.
- It has been identified by the Twentieth Century Society as one of London's important memorial structures. It also held very high value to contemporaries as a symbol of peace and remembrance.
- Its Art Deco-influenced interiors remain substantively 'as built' and in use for their original purpose. It is believed that this is the only such instance in major London buildings.
- The building contains fine mosaics, memorials, stained glass, sculpture, and bronze and wrought-iron work by some of the most talented and influential designers working in the inter war period.
- It is arguably the most important work by Ashley and Newman, a respected national architectural practice.
- Today, it is an important heritage and cultural destination and facility, receiving visits from an international audience and hosting key cultural events.
- The Library and Museum and UGLE's archive, maintained within the building, are important cultural heritage resources.
- As a Grade II* listed building, Freemasons' Hall has been given national recognition as being a *'particularly important building of more than special interest'*.

In summary, Freemasons' Hall has very considerable historical, associational, artistic, architectural and townscape value. On this basis, it is considered to be a designated heritage asset of national and hence **high significance**.

The tower entrance is an integral and key component of Ashley and Newman's vision for the site and their resolution of the particular site constraints that shaped their building. The design of the entrance and its steps thus makes a considerable contribution to the asset's overall significance.

2.4 Impact of the proposals on significance

The proposals will respect and retain the form, layout, dimensions and material usage of Ashley and Newman's original tower entrance steps. They also involve reinstatement of the missing bronze inlay strips to the symbolic and decorative 5-pointed star incised into the Portland stone in front of the door. Although renewal will result in medium term reduction in the tower entrance's patina of age, it will render the entrance safe for future users and will re-emphasise the importance of Ashley and Newman's 5-pointed incised star at the head of the steps, which at the present time is visually diminished.

Taken together, these impacts will amount to **no change** in the significance of the building and its prominence in the streetscape within the conservation area. The proposals will not affect the conservation area or other heritage assets in the vicinity of Freemasons' Hall in any way.

Annex I: Figures



Figure 1: View of western tower entrance looking along Great Queen Street



Figure 2: Tower entrance steps



Figure 3: Close up of entrance steps



Figure 4: Ashley & Newman c.1930 design for Freemasons' Hall (©UGLE)



Figure 5: 55 & 56 Great Queen Street in 1908 – examples of buildings demolished to make way for Freemason's Hall in 1927 (© Historic England)

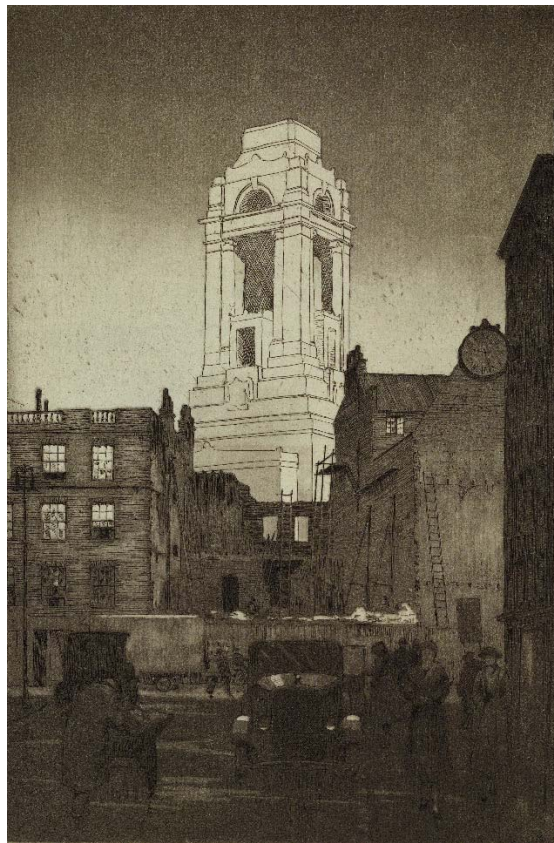


Figure 6: View of tower beyond partly demolished buildings c.1931 – see also (7) (©RIBA)

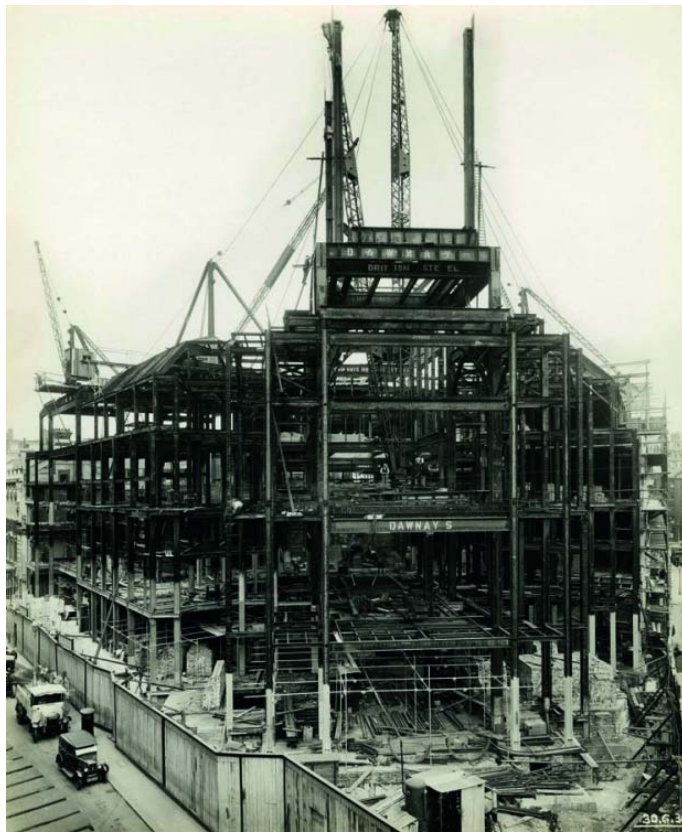


Figure 7: Western end in construction c1929 (©UGLE)



Figure 8: Great Queen Street elevation in construction c1930 (©UGLE)



Figure 9: View over partially demolished buildings 1931 (©UGLE)