

2-6 Southampton Row

Listed Building Consent for New Floors in Multi-function Rooms 1.05 & 2.07

Refer drawings: 586_1.05_109, 586_dF054_P1 & 586_dF055_P1

Introduction

The existing function rooms have a high degree of intactness and feature a number of important elements which contribute to the overall significance of the historic building.

In room 1.05, the features of interest include :

- decorated plaster vaulted ceiling;
- timber wainscot walls;
- two fireplaces including, grates, cheeks, hearths and surrounds;
- "Freedom from Slavery" stone tablet;
- leadlight windows;
- inscribed stone wall plaque;
- stone cameo bust;
- timber double doors;
- vaulted window reveals.

In room 2.07, the features of interest include:

- decorated coffer-effect ceiling;
- timber and glass display cabinet;
- fireplaces including, grates, cheeks, hearths and surrounds;
- plaster decoration on walls;
- leadlight windows;
- timber double doors;
- arched windows and mirrored reveals.

No changes are proposed to any of the significant items as listed above.

The existing floors consist of 20mm timber floorboards over timber joists in a filler joist floor. They are roughly finished and unlikely to have been presented as a final floor finish in the original building. There are remnants of a previous thin timber parquet veneer. During the buildings most recent period of operations, the function room had fitted carpets and were serviced with crudely floor-mounted trunking.

In support of the approved adaptive reuse to luxury hotel use, there is an operational requirement to ensure appropriate acoustic separation between spaces and to enhance the audio, visual and IT facilities in each room.

The small lobby into multifunction room 1.05 has a stone tile mosaic of some historic interest. This immovable, decorative element sets the datum for a flush floor in the multifunction room. The stone floor in the main corridor also controls the finished floor level in multifunction room 2.07.

The proposed floor build up is comprised of an acoustic matt roll and new, engineered floorboards to be laid over the existing floorboards which will be lowered on new joist cradles.

A mat well with carpet will also be set flush to the finished floor level and represents the larger surface area in the room. Electrical supply boxes will also be integrated into the floor build-up, allowing for optimum functionality in these semi-public spaces.



Figure 1: Room 1.05 as existing, showing important features and intrusive trunking for electrical services



Figure 2 Room 2.07 as existing, showing fireplace, display cabinets, arched windows and decorated coffer-effect ceiling.

The proposed floor build-up combines new engineered timber boards with a sunken mat well to meet the finishing and operation standards of a luxury hotel. This approach is considered to support the adaptive re-use of an historic building that has been on the heritage at risk register.

The operating requirement is for all finishes to be flush with one another to allow for ease of movement for guests and for mobile apparatus required for varying types of gatherings in the multi-function rooms.

Design and Access Statement

Use

The adaptive reuse of the buildings to hotel and restaurant is approved by Camden Council under 2012/5592/P and 2012/5591/L.

The changes in this supplementary application are proposed in support of a successful adaptation to hotel use that will assure appropriate and stable occupation into the future.

Layout

The scope of this application is limited to the two rooms nominated as multi-function rooms and referenced as 1.05 & 2.07 on the accompanying plans. The proposal affects the entire floor plane in both rooms.

Amount

The removal of floorboards is limited to those in the identified multi-function rooms 1.05 & 2.07. No other items are proposed for removal in this application for Listed Building Consent.

Scale

The proposed new floor build up is designed to fit within tolerances of the existing historic fabric so that it does not overlap decorative finishes or historic joinery. It is therefore considered appropriate in terms of scale and function.

Appearance

The material finish of the proposed new floorboards will be dark. The set out of the new fabric has been designed to maintain the detail finishes on the timber wainscot and the display cabinets in the respective function rooms.

Heritage Impact Statement

The proposed new floor build up in the function rooms requires the removal of the existing floor joists and filled floor pack. The existing floor joists have a limited degree of significance as a prosaic element of the original construction. They are typical of their time and construction type and do not specifically contribute to the uniqueness or rarity of the building. The floorboards do not appear to have ever been dressed for presentation and it is likely that they have been covered by carpet or other decorative finishes for the life span of the building to date. They would not be appropriate for reuse in a luxury hotel due to their rough finishing and butt join arrangement, but can be retained as part of the floor substructure.

The option to dress higher quality floor finishes over the existing floor boards would result in clashes with existing display cabinet in 2.07 and wainscot details in 1.05. Further more finishes dressed over the existing would deviate awkwardly from the datum of existing stone floors, requiring a step or a saddle that would overlap the detail of the stone floors. Therefore the new joist level is required to accommodate the depth of the existing floorboards, acoustic mat, engineered floorboards and the proposed mat well. The introduction of a mat well to the function rooms also serves to reduce acoustic transfer between adjacent spaces. As both

function rooms will be used for a variety of events, including audio-visual presentations, the need to dampen foot fall and insulate between spaces of differing use is also considered necessary for upgrade to contemporary hotel use.

There will be localised trimming of the floorboards to accommodate new air supply into the room. This removal is considered commensurate with the improvements to the thermal comfort of the building allowing it to be used in a contemporary way.

The balance of benefits to new fabric build ups outweighs the potential for harm in accommodating new material over existing arrangements, that would result in clumsy overlaps and present further maintenance and repair requirements to the building operators.

The proposal is considered to support the adaptive re-use of the building with appropriate consideration to the significant elements. The modification to the floors in these rooms are considered to be tolerable and do not affect the overall significance of the place.

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