

# M B DESIGN AND BUILD LTD

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## **DESIGN & ACCESS / HERITAGE STATEMENT – CHANGE OF USE OF 1NO. BT PHONEBOX TO 1NO. OFFICE POD @ OUTSIDE “THE BRITISH MUSEUM”, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, WC1B 3DG.**

### 1. Use

1.1 The proposal involves a change of use.

### 2. Amount

2.1 The proposal does not involve any increase in the size of the development.

### 3. Layout

3.1 The proposal does not involve any changes to the layout of the site.

3.2 As per previous planning consents for similar developments in several locations around the UK, no external paraphernalia will be added to the site.

### 4. Scale

4.1 The footprint of the site remains unaltered by the proposal.

### 5. Landscaping

5.1 The landscaping remains unaltered by the proposal.

### 6. Appearance and Design

6.1 The K2 and K6 red phone boxes are iconic pieces of both engineering and architecture. The aim of this proposal is to redefine their usage to suit modern-day needs and requirements without compromising their external appearance on the street scene.

6.2 The box is Listed and in a conservation area so careful consideration has been given to preserving both the box and its relationship to the conservation area. No external alterations are proposed and so the relationship with, and effect on, the area remains unchanged by the proposal. Furthermore, the phonebox remains unaffected by the proposal as all fixings are made into the base of the box, not into its sides.

6.3 Careful consideration has been given to update the use of the phone box(es) but at the same time maintain their character. The external appearance of the phone box(es) remains unaltered by the proposal, with the exception of the

introduction of a new electronic key pad-operated five-lever mortice lock fitted below the existing pull handle.

6.4 Externally, the phone box(es) will remain painted in BT phone box red, and a rolling maintenance programme will see the kiosks refurbished every two years. The maintenance programme will entail a complete overhaul, to include all exterior and interior paint and associated works. All paint used will be the same as that currently used by BT. The method statement for refurbishment will be as follows:

- 1) Sugar soap wash the boxes throughout after stripping the phone apparatus.
- 2) Strip back frame and lead fill and micro resin bond any cracks and imperfections on the frame and panels.
- 3) Apply one coat zinc oxide metal primer undercoat.
- 4) Apply one coat of BS referenced BT approved red paint, and then key surface to receive a final coat of topcoat over the entire kiosk.
- 5) Apply one coat Hammerite Metalshield paint, colour black, to the skirt and roof.

6.5 The existing glass panels will be replaced with 4mm-thick thermally toughened soda lime silicate safety glass to BS EN 12150-1:2000 in order to provide security and longevity of use. The glass used is supplied by Piper Glass and has been fitted in phonebox restorations for the last 27 years by Unicorn Kiosk Restorations, Unicorn Estate, Nutfield Road, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3ER; [www.unicornkiosks.com](http://www.unicornkiosks.com). Case study reference: <http://www.piperglass.co.uk/case-study-unicorn-kiosk-restorations.php>

6.6 Internally, the existing telephones and associated equipment will be removed back to the original shell. The new fully self-contained pod will not have any fixings to the carcass or floor plate of the phone box and can easily be moved in and out manually within minutes. It will use the existing electricity supply to the boxes, which is metered, and no telephone line is required. All decoration is placed onto the pod and not onto the kiosk.

6.7 A mock-up of the office installation is appended to this document. The office pod will provide printing, scanning, copying and WiFi services and will be accessible to registered users only. Members can join by downloading an application form from the applicant's website, following which ID and due diligence checks are made. CCTV will be installed in the kiosk for security.

6.8 Maintenance of the office equipment and supplies will be carried out daily, between 11.00 and 17.00. All waste paper will be removed by the maintenance staff. The door will remain closed during the day, except when users are entering or leaving the box.

6.9 There will be a Wi-Fi hotspot available to the general public within 3m of the office pods.

## 7. Access

7.1 The existing access to the phone box(es) is almost level, with one low step up, and remains unaltered by the scheme. The door will be maintained locked.

7.2 The site is close to public transport links and shopping areas, and parking is not required.

## 8. Appraisal

8.1 The concept of a public telephone box is now outdated as the majority of people own a mobile phone. The proposed new use maintains their iconic appearance but re-invents their use to suit the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The concept of adapting phone boxes to different uses has been adopted throughout the country with over 2000 to date adapted to varied uses.

8.2 This is a scheme to convert a number of disused iconic BT Kiosks into small advertising pods or small self-contained retail outlets, selling ice cream, coffee and other products suited to street sale. Planning Consent has been granted in many cities to date

8.3 "Thinking Outside the Box" is a charitable trust supporting homeless projects around the country by undertaking to give a percentage of their earnings from the retail uses of converted phoneboxes. In this, they currently have the support of the "Connections" homeless project in Westminster, together with that of the rough sleepers' project in Westminster and of Westminster Councillor Tim Mitchell.

8.4 Consent has been granted for a change of use to an office pod in Russell Square, London (Borough of Camden) and this is now in operation. The photograph below shows the pod.



8.5 In various parts of the UK, change-of-use consent has been granted to telephone boxes for various alternative uses. One such use is in Hexham, where a phonebox has been converted into an art gallery: <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/robson-green-opens-regions-smallest-6437349>. In Cheltenham, another organisation has converted four adjacent boxes on a pedestrianised area into an art gallery, which has both browsers and shoppers congregating around it. Similarly, in Lewisham, an organisation has converted a phonebox into a library: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lewisham-phone-box-turned-in-to-londons-smallest-library-9218293.html>. This is a Listed box and sited on the A20 into London, which is a major thoroughfare.

**M B Design & Build LLP**