

Heritage Statement



57-58 Russell Square, London WC1B 4HS

25 October 2016

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1. Introduction

The proposal being put forward is the modernisation of the existing toilets of the London Mathematical Society located at 57-58 Russell Square, London WC1B 4HS.

The buildings that comprise the Society are Grade II listed buildings within the Bedford Estates and are in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. They are in the Borough of Camden.

2. Character and Architectural and Historical Interest

57 Russell Square is an imposing 6 storey brick building situated on the western side of Russell Square. 58 Russell Square is a similar 5 storey brick building adjacent and connected to No.57. They were built in the early 19th century as private homes and are two of a row of terraced houses on the square. They are of special historical interest because of their situation in this beautiful and well maintained early 19th century terrace.

3. Principles of the Proposed development

The driving principle of the proposed development is to modernise the existing toilet facilities with an intervention done in such a way as to have minimal impact on the existing fabric of the building above lower ground floor, and to re-plan the lower ground floor toilets in a way that better suits the Society's requirements.

This approach is in keeping with English Heritage which states 'Grade II buildings are of special interest warranting every effort to preserve them' but goes on to define preservation as 'not harming' rather than keeping the building completely unchanged. English Heritage in this way recognises that some intervention will be required in listed buildings over time.

4. Minimisation of Impact on the Building and Sources Considered

The toilets at both 57 and 58 Russell Square have been modernised over time as required to suit the needs of the buildings' occupants. The toilets are again in need of modernisation and it is proposed that they are updated in a way that is sympathetic to the Grade II listed buildings they serve.

Original architectural details will be preserved. These include the cornice in the toilet on the half landing above ground floor, and all the doors and windows above lower ground floor. Some of the lower ground floor doors will be replaced with narrower doors to suit the new layout, and these doors will be 6 panel painted doors to match existing doors. Windows in the toilets will be preserved. Sash cords will be replaced where required, and the windows will be carefully restored.

By taking this approach the guiding principles and obligations for works to a Listed Building as outlined by English Heritage will be adhered to. The special interest of both 57 and 58 Russell Square, both Grade II listed buildings, arise from their contribution to the architecture and historic interest of the group of buildings of which they form a part. In this way minor, sympathetically executed internal alterations and modernisation can be considered to respect and maintain this special interest.

5. Methods Statement

The approach to the lower ground floor women's and men's toilets is to re-plan them in their existing position to better suit the Society's requirements. The society hosts conferences at which delegates may be predominantly female or male, and the availability of 4 unisex toilets better suits these conferences than the current arrangement. A private Building Control Body has been consulted on the proposed reduced manhole access size and finds this acceptable. All new fixtures and fittings and finishes will provide the clean and modern toilets that the Society requires.

The disabled toilet on the lower ground floor will be maintained in its current position and layout with new fixtures, fittings and finishes.

There are no historically significant features of the lower ground floor toilets that would require preserving. These toilets have been modernised periodically which means that those elements that are being replaced hold no specific historical significance.

It is proposed that a small cupboard will be created when the lower ground floor toilets are re-planned. This cupboard will have a matching 6 panel painted timber door and will have painted plasterboard interior with painted timber shelves. In this way although it will be a newly created part of the building, it will closely match the historic building elements.

It is proposed that the remaining toilets in 58 Russell Square be modernised; replacing fixtures, fittings and finishes which have no significant historical significance while retaining and preserving those features that form an integral part of the historic fabric of the building, namely the doors, windows and cornices. The layouts of these toilets will match the existing layouts.

The proposal for the toilet on the third floor of No. 57 Russell Square is to re-plan it and modernise it in a similar way to the toilets in No.58 Russell Square. There are no historically significant features of this toilet that require preservation.