
BRITISH MUSEUM

Heritage Statement

Extracted from the **Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy**

The British Museum is a cultural institution of international importance, occupying a major ensemble of outstanding grade I listed buildings which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of this the Bloomsbury Conservation Area as a whole.

The museum site covers the majority of the street block south of Montague Place. The principal South Front addresses Great Russell Street with a secondary frontage to Montague Place. The east side of the museum has a partial frontage to Montague Street.

The museum was built in stages as its collections expanded. However, both historic and modern development is of a large scale, although large portions of the building are not visible from the public realm due to the back land nature of much of the site; the site is effectively shielded from the east and west by the terraced houses lining Montague Street and Bedford Square.

On the north side of the museum, the King Edward VII Galleries were built in 1906-14 to the designs of John James Burnet. The building presents itself to Montague Place as a large-scale frontage in line with the university buildings on the northern side of the street. The façade is constructed from Portland stone and marble with vertically proportioned metal-framed windows

Set back from the frontage behind tall railings and a mature line of trees, this frontage forms an impressive landmark along Great Russell Street, and provides vistas from the south along narrow streets such as Museum Street, Coptic Street and Bury Place.

The symmetrical frontage is set back from the street behind a slightly raised forecourt. It comprises two tall storeys raised on a semi-basement and has a line of Ionic columns supporting an entablature with projecting cornice and a pair of lion statues flanking the entrance.

The attached design and access statement covers our attempts to ensure reversibility where feasible and minimise any impact to the fabric of the building.