

Planning Permission:

Site Address:	OMD Minerva House 1 North Crescent London WC1E 7ER
Principal Designer:	Trifle Creative Ltd, Unit 4 Galaxy House, 32 Leonard Street, London, EC2A 4LZ
Application Type:	Planning Permission
Proposal:	Install 2 x external AC units to supply 2 nd directors offices (2016/1515/L been granted for new offices)

Design and Access statement + Heritage Statement:

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Introduction:

OMD our client are located at Minerva House, 1-4 North Crescent a Grade II listed building. They are one of the largest and most innovative media communications companies in the world. It was initially formed out of the media departments of three of Omnicom's global advertising agencies: BBDO, DDB and TBWA. OMD is headquartered in New York, with more than 140 offices in 80 countries. Named 2005 Global Media Agency of the Year by *Adweek*, Global Media Network of the Year by *campaign* and 2005 Media Agency of the Year in the U.S. by *Advertising Age*, it has a leading market position in all major world regions and maintains more top market positions than any global competitor.

They have appointed Trifle Creative to design and build a new reception and ground floor space at Minerva House to fit with the change in company culture. Their current ground floor is dated, not client friendly and the space, which was originally open plan when a car show room, has been divided into offices and meeting rooms on the ground floor, they require the space to be open plan and suitable for informal meeting with clients and potential new business. This space will improve the working environment and bring the dated ground floor up to date.

History of Minerva House:

The application site is located on the western side of North Crescent, bounded by the Telephone Exchange building (no.5 North Crescent) to the north-east and Glen House (No.'s 200-208 Tottenham Court Road) to the southwest. The lawful use of the building is B1(office); it is currently occupied by a media agency OMD our client.

Minerva House is a Grade II four storey listed building. It was constructed between 1912 and 1913 and was formerly the car show room, repair workshop and offices of the Minerva Motor Car Company.

The main highlight of the building is its highly decorative curved Portland Stone front elevation, characterised by tall bowed bays with stone mullions and transoms, monumental Doric and Ionic pilasters, broken pediments with decorative cartouches and swags, and a statue of Minerva within a triumphal arch to the centre.

The floors of the building are largely open plan office space, however the second floor of the building is split up into a series of meeting rooms and private offices. The third floor is characterised by the steel frame supporting the large pitched roof that oversails the open plan office.

In the immediate surrounding area Glen House (No.'s 200-208 Tottenham Court Road) and the war memorial to the front of North Crescent are also Grade II listed.

The property lies within London's Central Activities Zone and within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The neighbouring Telephone Exchange building is classified by Camden Council as a positive unlisted building within the Conservation Area.

In terms of land uses in the surrounding area, there is a notable level of commercial and retail use, with nearby Tottenham Court Road being one of central London's key shopping streets. The area is also home to a significant residential population. The nearest residential property is no.9 Chenies Street. Furthermore a number of buildings on nearby Huntley Street to the north east are predominantly occupied for residential purposes.

Surrounding Buildings:

Glen House (no.'s 200-208 Tottenham Court Road) is located immediately to the west of Minerva House. It shares party walls with the application property to the front and rear of the building. A full height lightwell runs along the central part of the boundary between the two buildings. Glen House is located on the east side of Tottenham Court Road; like Minerva House it is also a Grade II Listed Building. It dates from 1913-1914, it was extended, in facsimile, to the north in 1923. The building has distinctive Art Deco "Mannerist" facades with giant pilasters rising the full height of the upper floors to support a projecting cornice.

The ground floor level does not have a formal shopfront in the traditional sense, and its windows are deeply recessed between simple pilasters with geometric designs to the bases, piers and capitals. They have a simple glazing design, with two mullions and a transom reflecting the more robust design of the windows in the upper floor. The intersections are adorned with paterae and the transoms have a fluted moulding. Below each window sill, there are three timber framed panels framing a grid of glass blocks. These glazed panels were designed in order to provide light to the basement (like the adjacent pavement lights).

The Telephone Exchange (no.5 North Crescent) is believed to have been constructed in 1913. The building was formerly the Museum Telephone Exchange, but is now offices. The accommodation is arranged over Basement, Ground and three upper floors. The third floor is set within a flat-topped mansard. The building is principally of interest for its curved red brick and Portland Stone front elevation, characterised by oversized features, designed in the geometric Art Deco style, including triple key-stones. The main building interiors retain some original features (staircases, concrete columns etc.), but these are mostly utilitarian in design or altered and are of little interest. The most interesting interior is found in the separate, but linked 2 storey building to the rear (apparently also early-1900's), which has an interesting internal character (open plan space, iron columned structure, fenestration).

Fitzroy House is a 1910's five storey former warehouse building. It has a curved elevation to the south on North Crescent that is characterised by a brown and red brick façade with white-painted features and interspersed with large triple- light windows. The narrow elevation to Chenies Street has a similar mix of red and brown brick with white-painted features and further triple-light windows. At Ground Floor level there is a rounded arched doorway, where the main entrance to the building is located and, to the right hand side of this door, a gated vehicle passageway gives access to the private parking area to the rear of the property. The

rear elevation is similar in design to that of the front elevations, but has been subject to extensive and unsympathetic interventions.

No.9 Chenies Street (or Chenies Street Chambers) is located immediately adjacent to Fitzroy House and is a red brick apartment block that forms the south west corner of Huntley Street. The thirty-six apartments within the building are laid out over lower ground, upper ground and four upper floors. The front (i.e. Chenies Street and Huntley Street) elevations of the building are characterised by projecting bays, Portland stone features and white-painted timber sash windows. The rear elevations of the building, that overlook the communal garden area, are generally constructed in London stock brick, with red brick projecting bays and a variety of white-painted window types.

The Eisenhower Centre is a painted concrete single-storey bunker, located at the centre of the crescent that is characterised by an asymmetrical footprint of octagonal and round buildings linked by a narrow corridor structure. The building was constructed between 1941 and 1942, and was originally a WW2 air raid shelter for high-level army personnel, including General Eisenhower, with connections via deep level tunnels to nearby Goodge Street Station. Reportedly, most of the D-Day Invasion was planned within the basement of the building. The building is currently used by TFL for storage and is known locally as "The Bunker".

Immediately in front of the Eisenhower Centre sits a Grade II listed War Memorial dating from 1923. It is a low stone obelisk commemorating the 12th County of London Regiment ("the Rangers").

The Mature tree on the corner of North Crescent and Chenies Street, directly in front of Fitzroy House, is identified as a 'feature of streetscape interest' within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal 2008.

View from Albert Place towards North Crescent and South Crescent is identified as a 'local view' of importance within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal 2008.

Past Planning History:

Minerva House was previously refurbished in 2013 by Trifle Creative Ltd. We have been appointed as the Principle Designer for the upper floors refurbishments.

The following are the most recent applications relating to the property:

Application with reference: 2016/1515/L (Sarah Freeman Camden)

Decision: Listed Building Consent - Granted 23-5-2016

Description: Internal alterations to include install / alterations to partitions at ground, 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors level of office building (Class B1).

Application with reference: 2013/2959/L (Hannah Walker - Camden)

Decision: Listed Building Consent - Granted 19-06-2013

Description: Works undertaken to the reception/ground floor area. Internal alterations to include alterations to partitions at ground floor level of office building (Class B1).

Application with reference: PS9804007R2

Decision: Grant Full Planning Permission with Conditions 23.07.1998.

Description: Alterations to the front elevation at ground and basement levels, including the formation of a basement area with steps up and a metal railing adjacent to the pavement; alterations to some of the windows on the rear and side elevations and the installation of plant on the rear of the roof.

Application with reference: PS9704463

Decision: Grant Full Planning Permission 01.08.1997.

Description: Change of use of the whole building from Class D1 (health authority/educational use) to use for office purposes (Class B1).

Application with reference: 2010/4322/P

Decision: Grant Full Planning Permission 18.10.2010.

Description: Internal and external alterations to existing office building (Class B1) including installation of roof mounted solar panels; erection of eight condenser units within light well to south west elevation; repairs to chimney stack, roof, parapets, gutters, and facades; new level access at ground floor level; refurbishment of toilet areas; and replacement of lift.

Application Proposals / Scope of work:

Attached is a breakdown of the proposed install of two new external AC units that will supply cool air to two new directors meeting rooms on the 2nd Floor. These will replace redundant AC units in situ.

M&E services currently in situ will be updated and will use existing waste and service routes to minimise further works where possible.

Conclusion:

Trifle Creative believes that the proposed internal works at Minerva House will not affect or dilute Bloomsbury Conservation Area, or the appearance of the façade, or any other part of Minerva House or any other building locally.

We believe the proposed works are sympathetic to the original listed building, which retains small amounts of original features internally on the ground floor; the works are like for like, and purely to update a dated reception and ground floor area.

We have had a site visit from Camden Council's, Hannah Walker, who is happy with the proposed work. Hannah would like us to gain Listed Building Consent so there are records of these minor internal changes for future records or planning applications.

We hope that Camden will support this proposal; if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to make contact.

Ross Robinson
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