

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

29 MUSEUM STREET LONDON WC1

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Image 1 - View looking north-west up Museum Street from Little Russell Street

1. Introduction

Background

The application site comprises a single mid terrace property on the west side of Museum Street. Just to the North across Great Russell Street is the British Museum, and the majority of ground floor businesses in this area cater to the tourists attracted by that institution. Upper floors vary between business and residential uses.

This property is four storeys in height, and also has a basement. The roof is flat and of concrete construction, with access through a dormer at the top of the main stair. The Ground and Basement are currently unoccupied, they were previously tenanted by 'Seoul Mate', a Korean grocery store. The 1st floor is also currently unoccupied; the most recent use was B1. The 2nd and 3rd floor are occupied by an accountancy firm (A2).

The property is situated within Camden's Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is Grade II Listed. The listing includes Nos.27-34, this is nearly the entire terrace running along the east side of the block. However, No.48, despite being closer in style to Nos.27-34 is included in a separate the listing for the north side of the block. There are few remaining features of merit internally, and this is reflected in the listing entry, which only mentions interior features to 'The Plough' public house at No.27.

The below extract includes the parts of the list entry which apply to No.29;
Stucco with rusticated pilaster strips separating each house and at angles. Modified French Renaissance style. 4 storeys. 3 windows each. Nos.29-34 with C19/early C20 shopfronts. 1st floor round-arched, architraved, recessed 2-pane sashes, above which architraved oculi enriched with swags. 2nd floor console bracketed sill bands to segmental-arched architraved sashes. Console bracketed cornice beneath 3rd floor architraved sashes with keys. Nos 28-34 with plain parapet.

The proposals herein are for the most part internal changes to improve the suitability of the building for modern office use. The alterations are minimal and respect the remaining original features, and in cases restore layout and finishes that have previously been removed. The external additions consist purely of plant at roof level for new heating/cooling systems on the 1st to 3rd floors.



Image 2 – Location Plan

Proposal

The application can be split into three main elements, listed as follows:

- A) New heating-cooling plant to be installed at roof level. Supported either on new steel beams between party walls, or directly on roof structure. This will depend on subsequent design by an engineer prior to installation, the option currently shown including new steel beams is the more obtrusive.
- B) New internal heating-cooling units to be installed on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, with 2No. units per floor. Pipes and cables between rooftop and internal units to run down rear of building adjacent to existing rainwater downpipe (see dashed red line on image opposite). Pipes/Cables to enter each floor at high level and run behind new timber cornices to the internal units. Internal units to be fixed carefully to walls, avoiding any existing features of merit.
- C) Refurbishment of 1st floor offices. This refurbishment will involve the installation of acoustic insulation at floor level to the 1st floor office space. The existing flooring will be taken up, sanded and treated, before being re-installed above the new acoustic insulation (See Drg P07 for detail). Existing and new cabling for power, lighting and fire alarm systems will be re-routed in ducts within the floor construction. Where they travel across walls and ceilings (to detectors, lights, sockets etc.) they will be chased in.
- D) Refurbishment of W.C. on landing of 1st to ground stair flight. Existing sanitary ware to be replaced with new toilet and washbasin. New hot water heater to be installed. Secondary glazing to existing steel frame window (See Drg P07 for detail).



Image 3 - 29 Museum Street rear elevation

2. Context

Locality

As previously mentioned, the British Museum forms the focus of this area, and lies just to the north of the property in question. Many of the local businesses at ground level, particularly along Museum Street are dependent on the tourists attracted to the area by the British Museum.

The section of Museum street between the junctions with Gilbert Place and Little Russell Street has been pedestrianised, with a central cycle lane. No.29 faces directly onto the boundary of the pedestrianised area at the junction with Gilbert Place.

Being so central it is served by a number of good local amenities, transport links, public and private services. Vehicular traffic has been deliberately minimised through the pedestrianised area mentioned above and through the introduction of one-way systems. However, the close proximity of the Museum means that pedestrian traffic is heavy, particularly as this street is one of the more direct pedestrian routes towards Covent Garden and on to Trafalgar Square and the West End.

Buildings

On the stretch of Museum Street between Little Russell Street and Great Russell Street all the buildings to both sides of the street are listed. The entirety of the facades above the ground floor are uniform, and, excluding the two public houses, the ground floor frontages are generally similar. For more information, please see the extract from the listing entry on page 2.

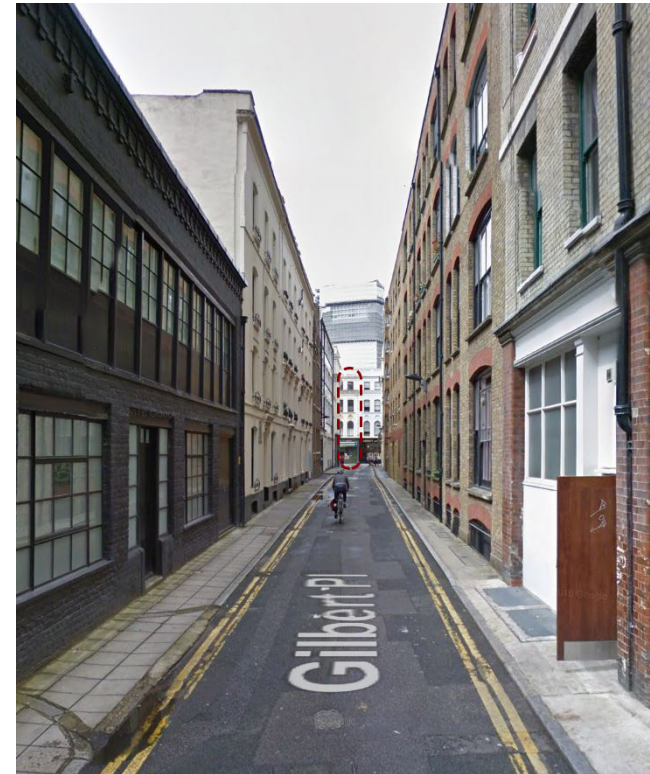


Image 4 - Approach from Gilbert Place

3. Design

Usage

The proposal does not entail any changes to use classes.

Appearance

Externally the only change is the new rooftop plant and associated pipes/cabling. Due to the high parapet and the setting back of the plant, this change will not be visible from any public street, even from the long approach vista down Gilbert Place shown in image 4. There are very few windows that overlook the rooftop, and none of those are close by. The acoustic report accompanying the application verifies that the noise impact from the new plant is within regulatory limits.

The new pipe/cable route between the rooftop plant and the associated internal units will run on the rear façade, entering the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors at high level to connect to the internal units. This façade is not of any notable merit, and is not visible from any publicly accessible areas.

Sustainability

A Sustainability Statement has not been provided as part of this application. However, aspects of the design, materials and waste, energy and water usage among other items have been considered. The new lighting and hot water heater will use less energy than the existing, and the new sanitary ware to the W.C. will be more efficient in terms of water usage than the current fixtures.

The proposals for this property are intended to make it viable for use as a modern office, and this continued use will sustain it for many years to come.

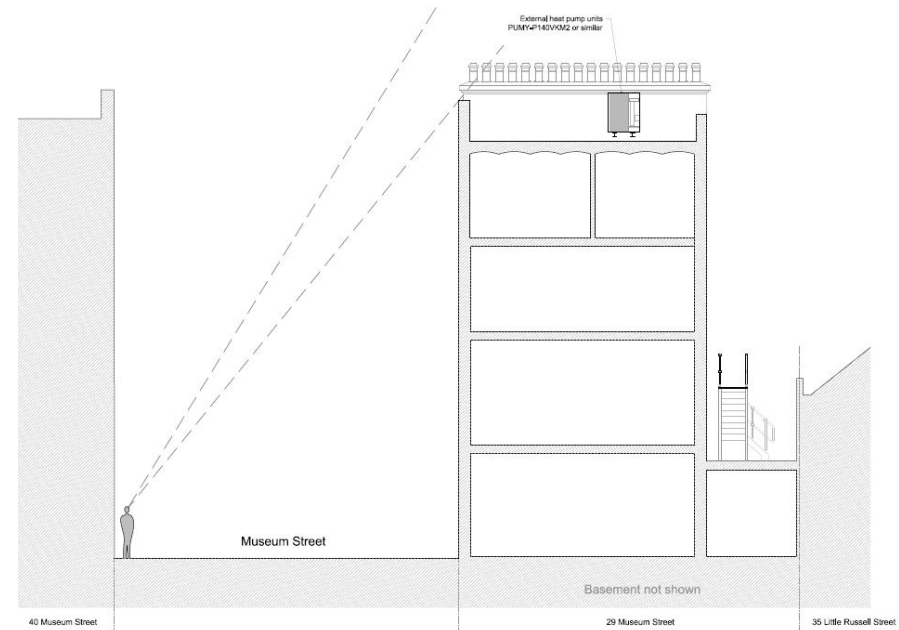


Image 5 – Section showing new plant and sightlines

4. Access

Entrance and Circulation

The entrance door to the common parts/upper floors access has a step up from street level, this will remain unchanged.

The only change to circulation is the unblocking of a doorway from the stair landing into the rooms on the 1st floor, where the existing door had been fixed shut previously. This change will revert the 1st floor circulation back to how it would have been originally.

Inclusivity

Due to the fact that this is a listed building, and the minor nature of the internal alterations, inclusivity of access will remain largely unchanged. However, where improvements can be made they will be, for example in the new layout of the refurbished W.C or the installation of a contrasting nosing to steps.

Maintenance and Refuse

Access for purposes of maintenance, emergency services, refuse etc. will remain unchanged.

Transport

The application site is in a very central area with access to bus stops, tube stations and cycle facilities all within a short walking distance. The majority of services can be reached without the need for transportation in any case.