

The British Museum: Perimeter Properties

Design Statement for minor alterations to applications
2015/3203/P & 2015/4344/L

November 2016

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Minor Alterations

The proposed alterations documented in this application comprise minor adjustments to the consented applications for the refurbishment and adaptation of existing buildings 8-11 Montague Street and 39 Russell Square. These alterations to the application information relate to the implementation of strategies outlined in the consented Design and Access Statement and refer to services distribution, fabric upgrade to ensure a safe fire strategy, and necessary repair/replacement works to building elements damaged beyond repair.

Following a continued dialogue with the London Borough of Camden planning department throughout the process, including approvals for discharge of conditions and a subsequent minor material amendment application, this further application is intended to clarify all items that may not have formal consent despite all endeavours to implement the works in line with the strategies outlined in the consented scheme.

Services Distribution

The consented Design and Access Statement (appendix c) contains a comprehensive selection of photographs documenting the existing condition of the properties. These images show that the existing servicing strategy utilised dado trunking, face fixed cabling routes in many areas and some comprehensive surface mounted duct routes associated with the former laboratory functions. As a function of the consented application, the removal of these services has been carried out, ultimately reducing impact on the historic building and fabric. This was recognised in both planning and listed building consent decision notices.

‘removal of outdated services and the introduction of co-ordinated state of the art M&E which future proofs the building is also welcomed’.

In support of this application, a further series of photographs has been compiled to illustrate the considerable improvements made by adopting this strategy. This extends to the installation of dado trunking, which was established at an early briefing stage and follows the existing strategy (albeit in a more consolidated manner), adhering to the message in the Design and Access Statement for *‘functional modifications being in the spirit of light touch intervention, clearly identifiable and reversible’*. This is commensurate with the ‘light refurbishment’ project scope and allows for future adaptation whilst preventing subsequent damage, a positive feature when letting office space.

The intention to re-use fabric voids and existing risers has been carried through. Riser locations are therefore generally located in the same corner and wall locations in which the existing building had already been modified for the same reasons. A typical strategy has been implemented across 8-11 Montague Street, taking precedent from the existing condition and neighbouring properties. In contrast to these examples however, new risers have been implemented using lightweight boxing in construction to conceal the services themselves, further improving the existing condition.



Typical basement image pre construction



Typical basement as constructed



Typical existing riser location



Typical riser location as installed

Fire Strategy

It is noted that a number of doors have been modified and refurbished. This has been carried out to fulfill requirements set out in the fire strategy report that is submitted in support of this application as reference. These steps have been made to ensure the safety of occupants as well as the protection of the historic fabric and do not affect the appearance of historic doors. New doors included in the consented plan layouts have been specified to match existing adjacent and fulfil fire protection requirements.

External Services

The strategy for removal of bulky and unattractive services extends externally. Rear elevations and light wells that were cluttered with services have been reinstated. At the rear of number 10 Montague Street, a series of partitions have also been removed to enable reinstatement of the full lightwell volume. Replacement services are minimal in comparison, with a small number of external condenser units located at ground floor to the rear of number 11 Montague Street and one in the lower ground lightwell to the rear of number 39 Russell Square. Boiler flues and mechanical extract units (pictured below right) are located consistently at the first floor roof level to the rear of 8, 9 and 10 Montague Street. This approach represents a significant improvement in terms of appearance, whilst providing the properties with modern standard services.

The property boundary to the rear as identified in the consented drawings has been constructed with new perimeter railings. These match the typical details of existing adjacent railings and can be seen in the photograph below right.

External Lighting has been installed within the lower ground light wells to the front of the properties. These are below the ground level and serve to illuminate the shaded lower external spaces, illuminating secondary escape stairs from the basement and providing a level of security to the front of the properties. At the rear of number 11 Montague Street, an external light fitting has been installed to provide illumination to the ground floor terrace area, where safe access for maintenance will be required to mechanical services and existing rooflights.



Typical light well services pre- construction



Typical light well as constructed



Typical rear elevation services pre- construction



External lighting as installed



External Mechanical services / railings as installed

To summarise, the content of these applications represents minor amendments to consented applications 2015/3203/P and 2015/4344/L. The consented drawings belonging to these applications, also incorporating approved minor amendments to the rear of 39 Russell Square as represented in application references 2016/1540/P and 2016/1551/L, have been submitted as part of this application and are to be read as the 'existing' drawings.

Minor amendments have been incorporated within a revised set of plan layout drawings, where revision clouds and a key reference highlight items that may not have been made explicit in the consented plans or have altered slightly during the construction process.

In addition to this revised set of layout drawings, please also refer to a schedule of photographs that evidence the significant improvements made to the properties as part of the current programme of works. These images highlight service riser locations as well as electrical distribution and external flue routes and document the level of refurbishment carried out as part of the current works.

Please also refer to services installation drawings that illustrate the full extent of new services throughout the properties. This can be read in conjunction with the aforementioned schedule of photographs.

Finally, we provide the fire engineering report that formed the basis of the implemented fire strategy and justifies any discreet modifications to existing doors across the properties.

We hope that this information represents the significant improvement works that have been carried out to numbers 8-11 Montague Street and 39 Russell Square. The tired condition and congested service arrangements have been upgraded to ensure a new lease of life for the properties and renewed fitness for purpose for years to come.

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