

Heritage Statement

30 Euston Square, Camden, London

Introduction

1. This heritage statement has been written by Heritage Collective on behalf of The Royal College of General Practitioners. It relates to the installation of a new entrance door at 30 Euston Square, Euston in the London Borough of Camden.
2. A planning and listed building consent application was submitted to the council in December 2016 and was unable to be validated as a Heritage Assessment of the building was required. This report fulfils that requirement, assessing the significance of 30 Euston Square as a listed grade II* building and the potential effects of the proposals on that significance. A site visit was carried out on 3 February 2017 and informs the assessment.¹

30 Euston Square Background

3. 30 Euston Square was originally built as the national headquarters to the London Edinburgh & Glasgow Assurance Company. The building was designed by Arthur Beresford Pite (1861-1934) over a series of three phases in 1906-8, 1923 and 1932. Pite was not involved in the design for the last phase which was designed by WH Gunton.
4. The building underwent significant refurbishment works in 2012 following planning and listed building consent being granted in 2011 (LPA Ref: 2010/4901/L & 2010/4900/P). These works involved

'Change of use of building from vacant offices (Class B1) to Royal College of General Practitioners Headquarters (Sui Generis), extensions and alterations at 3rd, 4th and 5th floor levels including creation of additional accommodation, plant rooms and rear terrace at 4th floor level, extension

¹ The whole building was not inspected at the time of the site visit due to restricted access arrangements, it was only the areas of the building that had the potential to be affected by the works that were visited.

into lightwell 1 and enclosure of lightwells 1 & 2 with glazed roof plus elevational alterations.'

5. No works appear to have been carried out to the foyer area at this time, which is now subject to this application. This is possibly due to the foyer surviving largely as built and represents an unaltered section of the building.

Heritage Significance and Values

6. The list description summarises the reason for designation as the following:

'Nos. 1-9 Melton Street is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Architectural interest: a distinctive Edwardian office building designed in a scholarly and inventive Greek manner * Authorship: a major work by the distinguished architect A Beresford Pite * Materials and craftsmanship: fine-quality stonework with carved decoration by Farmer & Brindley, the noted firm of architectural sculptors; elaborate ironwork * Interiors: the entrance hall is one of the most remarkable tiled interiors in an Edwardian commercial building; good office fittings, chimneypieces and stairs; extensive survival of tiled finishes * The 1923 extension, also by Pite, is a carefully considered adjunct to the earlier block, with the same high-quality stonework and ironwork'*

7. 30 Euston Square is a building of architectural and historic interest. Following extensive refurbishment works in 2011 the building has been sensitively upgraded. The external elevation of the building with its inventive Greek manner represented in the window dressings, giant fluted Ionic columns and entablature all contribute to the appearance and interest of the building. Internally a number of features survive, these include but are not limited to; the mosaic floor tiling in the reception room, the decorative tile finishes throughout the building, timber panelling within the "Heritage Suites", cornicing, joinery including doors, architraves and skirting.
8. The association with A Beresford Pite, Farmer and Brinley and a lesser extent WH Gunton and the London Edinburgh & Glasgow Assurance Company also contribute to the interest of the building.
9. The decorative tile finishes, mosaic floor and fireplace in the entrance reflect the high level of craftsmanship throughout the building and all contribute to architectural interest.

Proposals and Effect on Significance

10. The proposals and effects of these on the significance of the building are as below:
 - The removal of the existing internal entrance porch and its replacement with a turnstile door with new glazing. See drawings and specifications that accompany this application for further detail.
11. The existing screen to be removed dates to the original design of the building, although it has been altered with new doors replacing the original and changes to some of the decorative panelling over one of the doors. The junction with the wall appears rather clumsily attached to the wall in contrast to the rest of the high level finish of the existing entrance area. The proposed new doors would require minimal if any intervention into the floor. The new turnstile has been chosen to improve the energy efficiency of the building and the lightweight glazing chosen for the doors would allow light into what is currently quite a dark space in comparison to other areas of the building. As part of the proposals the existing entrance rug will be removed. This will reveal more of the mosaic and restore an opportunity to appreciate its original proportions and design.
12. Whilst the removal of an original feature will result in some harm this will be at the lower end of less than substantial harm. The proposed alterations will leave the vast majority of the built fabric of the listed building, and the vast majority of its floor plan, completely untouched. Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. In this case the most significant aspects of the building, its external form and appearance and contribution to the wider area and the vast majority of its historic fabric, will be retained. The removal of the entry rug will better reveal the floor tiling, which is identified as a major contributor to the significance of the building. The removal of this small lobby entrance is a minor alteration and will have only a very slight effect on the historic and architectural of 30 Euston Square. The change will provide a lighter lobby area and will allow views into the building without having to enter, making the significance of the building more accessible to the general public.
13. Whilst there is a slight level of harm this should be weighed against the benefits of these proposals which include the refurbishment of the lobby area.

- Insert glazed doors within the existing archway from the entrance hallway to the café area;
14. This change would preserve the significance of the building. It replicates the existing arrangement within this area and shows the change can be accommodated without affecting the significance of the building. The new glazed doors would require minimal intervention into historic fabric and would preserve an experience of the former opening through the use of glazing. The new glazing would improve security and the energy efficiency of the building without causing harm to any features that contribute to the significance of the building.
- New suspended lighting in the lobby area and painting of the ceiling.
15. This change will preserve the significance of the building. The new cables for the lighting will be located sensitively within the ceiling void without affecting the decorative detailing on the ceiling. The new openings for the cabling will be made good and the whole ceiling will be redecorated in like for like colours enhancing this area. These changes will preserve if not enhance the significance of the building.
16. Overall the proposals will result in a very slight level of less than substantial harm due to the removal of an original feature. This slight level of harm should be weighed against the benefits of the proposals, better revealing the mosaic floor structure and redecoration of the ceiling to reflect its original colour and enhance the entrance space. This is in accordance with paragraphs 132-134 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 which requires the slight level of harm to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals.
17. The proposed works respect the heritage assets and have due regard for the special character of the building in accordance with Policy DP25.

Summary

18. 30 Euston Square is a listed grade II* building that was built as the national Headquarters for London Edinburgh & Glasgow Assurance Company. It has a number of architectural, historic and artistic features surviving both internally and externally including a mosaic floor in the reception area.

19. The proposed works are for the installation of new turnstile in the entrance lobby and the installation of suspended lighting in the entrance lobby. The refurbishment is minor and whilst it will require the removal of an original feature (which has been altered) it will result in a very low level of less than substantial harm when taken into consideration against the significance of the whole of the building. The very slight level of harm should be weighed against the enhancement to the lobby area, exposure of the tiled floor, repainting and refurbishing the ceiling in this area in accordance with the NPPF and local policy.

APPENDIX 1: Photographs 2017



Appendix 2.1 and 2.2: Existing reception area





Appendix 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5: Existing door arrangement

