

Design & Access Statement

**Roof and Replacement Windows -
3rd Floor Apartment, Freemasons' Hall,
60 Great Queen Street, London WC2B
5AZ**

For

United Grand Lodge of England



heritageplaces

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1 DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.1 Purpose of statement

This design and access statement provides essential information relating to the proposal to (i) renew a section of flat asphalt roof covering at Freemasons' Hall, including associated upgrading of thermal insulation, and (ii) to replace windows to a former caretaker's apartment, all at third floor level. It has been prepared on behalf of the United Grand Lodge of England to accompany a planning application to the London Borough of Camden. An associated listed building consent application covering these and related internal proposals to reconfigure the former residential apartment as three new lodge/meeting rooms has already been submitted on 17th July 2017 (Planning Portal reference PP-06237625).

1.2 The application site

Freemasons' Hall [NGR: TQ 30470 81244] lies on the south east side of Great Queen Street at the southernmost tip of the London Borough of Camden and on the eastern edge of Covent Garden.

The present day Freemasons' Hall is the third such structure on the site and/or adjoining land, the first being completed in 1775-76. It occupies a substantial part of Sub-Area 2 of the Seven Dials Conservation Area, which, designated in 1971 by the GLC, was the first of the five constituent subareas to be recognised as being of special architectural and historic interest in this way.

As the London Borough of Camden's adopted conservation area appraisal of 1999 notes, Great Queen Street was built in the first half of the 17th century, forming a continuation of the north side of Lincoln's Inn Fields until the construction of Kingsway in 1905. Its character and built form were shaped by the development of the first Freemasons' Hall, constructed to the design of Thomas Sandby, a watercolour artist-turned-architect, in 1775-76.

The site of today's Freemasons' Hall is of irregular polygonal shape, covering 2.25 acres and is entirely taken up by the Grade II* listed building, designed by architects Ashley & Newman and completed in 1933 [Map 1; Figures 1, 2]. Its principal entrance occupies the south west corner of the site and faces roughly west northwest. The site and building are bordered by Great Queen Street to the north west, Wild Street to the south and Wild Court to the south east.

1.3 Proposals

1.3.1 Third floor apartment

When it was built, Ashley & Newman's Freemason's Hall included a caretaker's apartment - broken into two distinct sections - at third floor level away from the public and ceremonial areas of the building. That apartment has lain empty for several years and it is considered highly improbable that it will ever be utilised again for its original or similar residential use. Given the continuous high demand on accommodation within Freemasons' Hall and the specific need for smaller meeting spaces and ceremonial rehearsal rooms, UGLE wishes to reconfigure and convert the former caretaker's apartment to meet these needs. Following a pre-application response from Camden Council (2016/4553/PRE; 16th November 2016), and as previously noted in section 1.1 above, a listed building consent application has already been submitted relating to these proposals. Associated with the internal works are various external works, which did not form part of the preapp consultation, but which are now the subject of this design and access statement and the connected planning application. These external works are:

- To recover the asphalted sloping third floor apartment dormers and the higher level flat roof surface at their heads that overlies the apartment, along with the separate asphalted flat roof over the former dining room and kitchen of the larger of the two apartment sections;
- To erect a new outer brick skin to the mansard wall at the rear of the higher level flat roof in order to increase its weather resistance and improve its condition;
- To replace the non-original single glazed windows in the third floor apartment with matching double glazed units to improve their thermal performance.

1.4 Design statement

1.4.1 Third floor apartment

Existing

The apartment lies away from the principal ceremonial areas within the building. It is entirely self-contained and, from the corridor by which it is accessed (which is of a highly institutional character), it would not be appreciated that modest residential accommodation lay hidden within [Figures 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]. As already noted, it has been vacant for several years since the role of a caretaker became redundant due to changing building management needs. Currently, it is used for the informal storage of furniture.

The apartment is currently configured as two separate domestic spaces. Both are accessed from the third floor corridor. As might be anticipated, the character of the spaces is modest, in marked contrast to the decorative treatment found elsewhere within the Freemasons' Hall, particularly in the ceremonial areas, but also including the corridor outside the apartment. Nonetheless, it is true to say that the modest domestic character reflects the original design intention and use of the apartment,

although, particularly in the smaller of the two spaces, later 20th century alterations and insertions have resulted in the inclusion of more modern fixtures and fittings. The larger section of the apartment retains more fully its original internal joinery, including architraves, skirting boards, picture rails, doors and cupboards, which, as the Council's preapplication advice notes, provides 'a level of refinement and quality, albeit of a modest nature'.

The proposals covered in the planning application

Since seeking preapp advice, UGLE has developed its thinking for the future use and servicing of the reconfigured accommodation and this has led to amendments to the final layout, including the inclusion of external works, which are the subject of this planning submission. As outlined in section 1.3.1, these external works are:

- Overlaying of the existing asphalt roof finishes externally with a total of 80mm thickness of insulation and cork board, which is to be topped by a new asphalt coating laid on a separating layer of sheathing felt – see drawings 1042.06, 1042.08, 1042.16 and 1042.19 in Annex III.
- Construction of a new outer 73mm brick skin to protect the existing thin and poor condition external brick wall at high level over the roof coverings, improving its weather-resistance and thermal insulation properties – see existing arrangement below and drawings 1042.16 and 1042.19 in Annex III.



- Renewal of later single glazed metal framed windows to the apartment in double glazed units of otherwise matching design – see drawings 1042.11, 1042.23 and 1042.19 in Annex III.

1.5 Technical requirements and standards

All works are to be undertaken in accordance with Building Regulations and British Standards. Material and workmanship will reflect best conservation practice.

1.6 Use and layout

The project will not result in any change to the use of the building. Changes in the building's layout are restricted to reconfiguration of the spaces within the existing caretaker's apartment.

1.7 Access issues

On completion of the project, existing access arrangements into the building will continue unaffected and as existing.

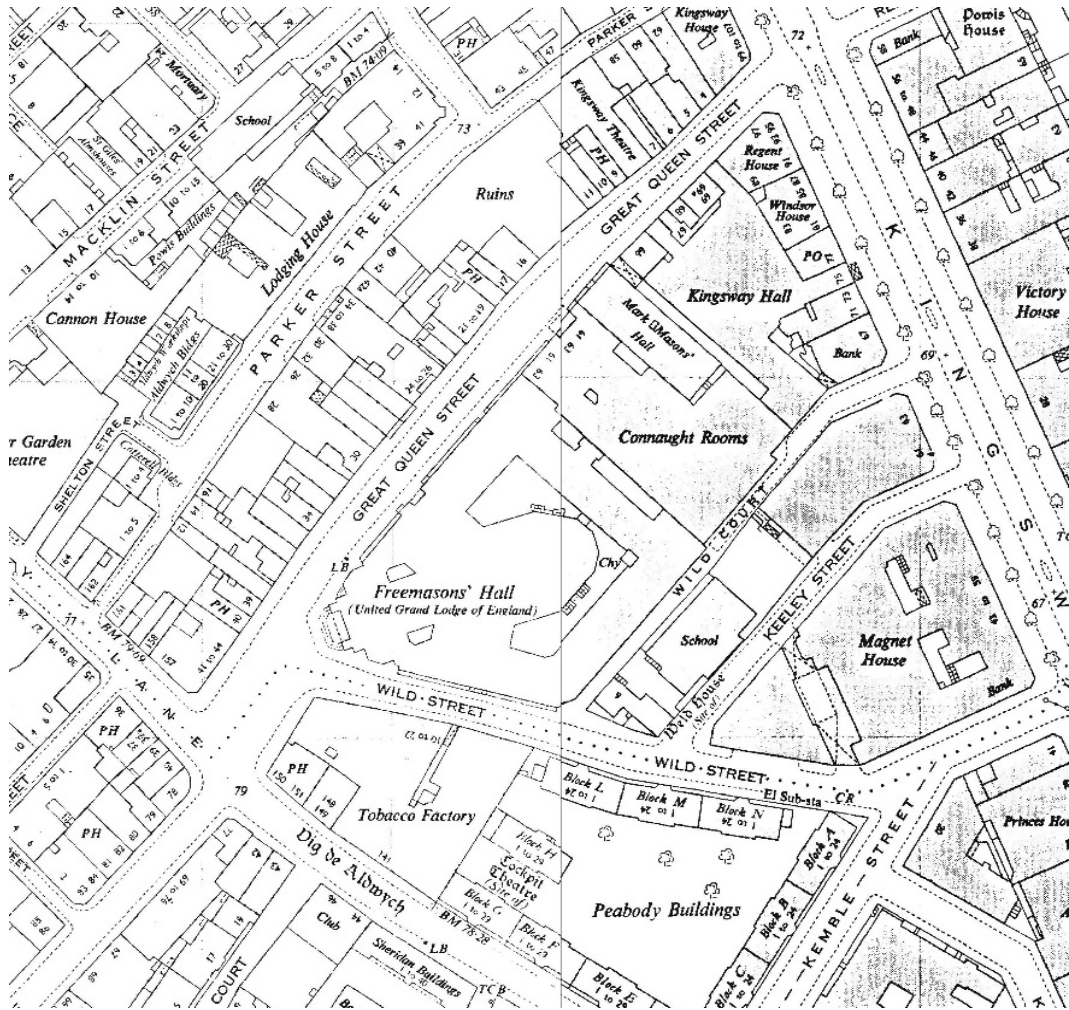
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Annex I: Maps & Plans



Map 3: 1925 1:2500 OS Map – the first large scale post-completion map (©Landmark Information Group)

Annex II: Figures



Figure 1: View of western tower looking along Great Queen Street



Figure 2: Ashley & Newman c.1930 design for Freemasons' Hall (©UGLE)



Figure 3: 55 & 56 Great Queen Street in 1908 – examples of buildings demolished to make way for Freemason's Hall in 1927 (© Historic England)

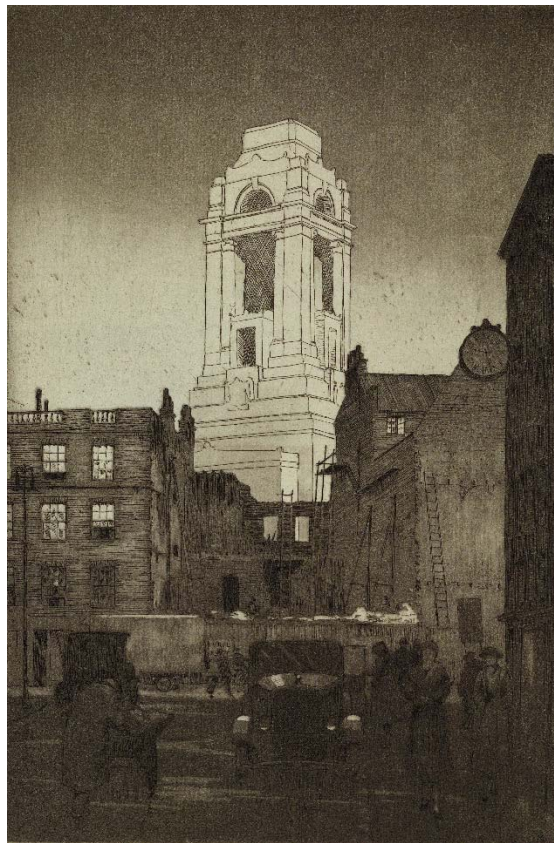


Figure 4: View of tower beyond partly demolished buildings c.1931 – see also (7) (©RIBA)

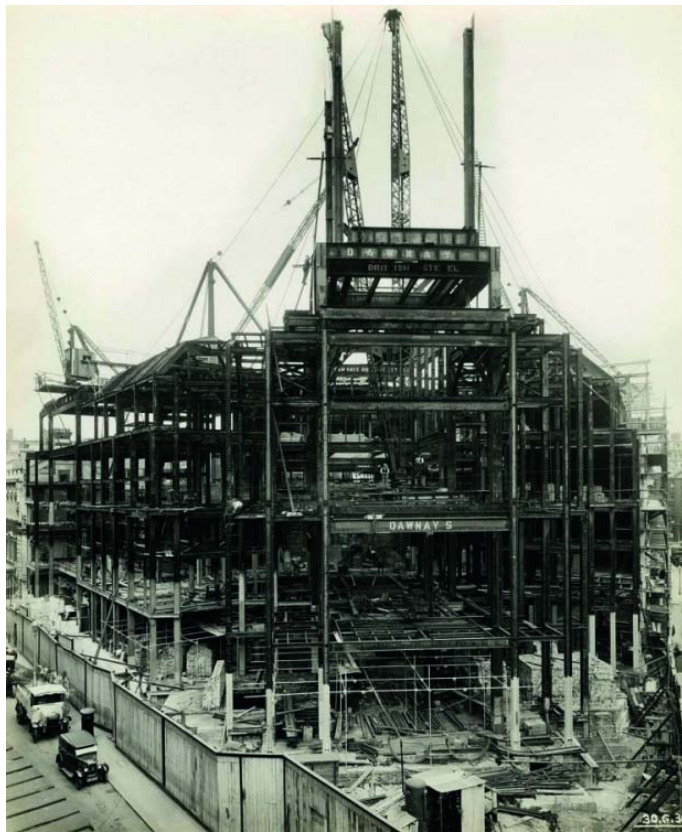


Figure 5: Western end in construction c1929 (©UGLE)



Figure 6: Great Queen Street elevation in construction c1930 (©UGLE)



Figure 7: View over partially demolished buildings 1931 (©UGLE)



Figure 8: Access corridor outside third floor apartment



Figure 9: Internal corridor within apartment



Figure 10: Former reception room in apartment



Figure 11: Sitting room within apartment



Figure 12: Former kitchen

Annex III: Existing and Proposed Plans