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*A r c h i t e c t s*



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**Heritage Statement**

**Shop Front Renovation and Advertising Amendment - 90 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PS**



*View of existing 90 Great Russell Street Shop Front*

**CONTEXT NOTES:**

***90 Great Russell Street and its Context:***

Great Russell Street includes many buildings of considerable historical interest, including Robert Smirke's British Museum Portico (1837) and one of John Nash's earliest urban set essays at the eastern end.

The British Museum has long influenced the character of Gt Russell Street, as well as Coptic and Museum Streets which contain antiquation bookshops, galleries, numismatists as well as cafes and an historic public house.



*The 89, 90 and 91 Great Russell Street Ensemble*

Our proposed treatment of the signage and redecoration of the shop front outlined following has been formulated with regard to the historic nature of all three buildings in this urban ensemble.

These three houses were originally constructed in darkened brick with a rusticated stucco ground floor.

All three buildings have slate mansard roofs with dormers.

The frontages of all three buildings have 3 windows each with gauged brick flat arches and recessed sash windows.

No.90 has some of its original glazing bars.

All three buildings have stucco cornices and blocking courses.

#### *Some Individual Details of note:*

**No. 89** includes a round arched doorway with pilaster jambs carrying a cornice head; fanlight and panelled door.

'Y' shaped glazing bars to dormer windows.

Attached cast-iron railings.

**No.90** has a reconstructed late 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfront with pilasters carrying a timber entablature flanked by brackets.

This shop window once included operable opening corner lights, but these have subsequently been sealed.

The square-headed doorway has a single glass sheet over-panel with back-painted gilt address number.

There is a false panelled door which is not original and probably post WWII.

There is a fine Sugg gas lamp mounted to the west of the entry door on the plaster pilaster.



*No.91* is later 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco shopfront with Ionic pilasters carrying entablature with dentil cornice.

3 ground floor openings with arched end bays with enriched spandrels.

Doorway with pilaster jambs carrying entablature with figured frieze.

No.91 was the home of George du Maurier 1863-1868

#### *Details of The Shopfront of No. 90:*

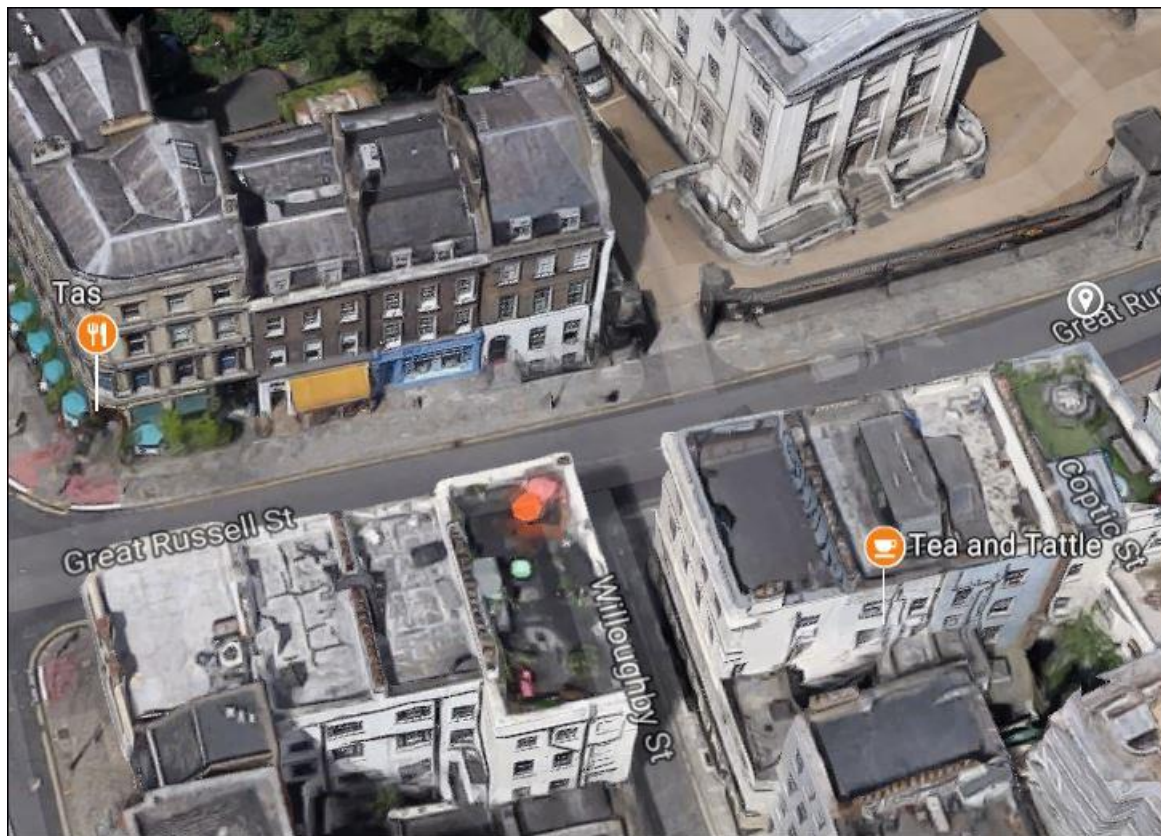
The character of the 90 elevation has been considerably altered from its original late 18<sup>th</sup> century condition.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the building appears to have been converted into a shop with a large and display window centred in a double border of glass panes.

The area in front was paved over and the railings were removed

Note: there are several inaccuracies in the recorded Listing Notes for this building:

- a) The door of No. 90 which is noted in the Listing notes as panelled has long since been replaced with a flush door with planted beadings. This door is a flat panel, and has been extended to fill the opening with edge lippings.
- b) There is no fanlight over the entry door of No. 90.
- c) There are no shoe scrapers at any of the 3 doorways noted in the Listing.



*Aerial View showing the 3 Georgian Houses and their Proximity to the British Museum Forecourt*



*Proposed Advertising Layout on Existing Sign Fascia Board*

**PROPOSAL:**

***Continued Building 'Educational D1 Use':***

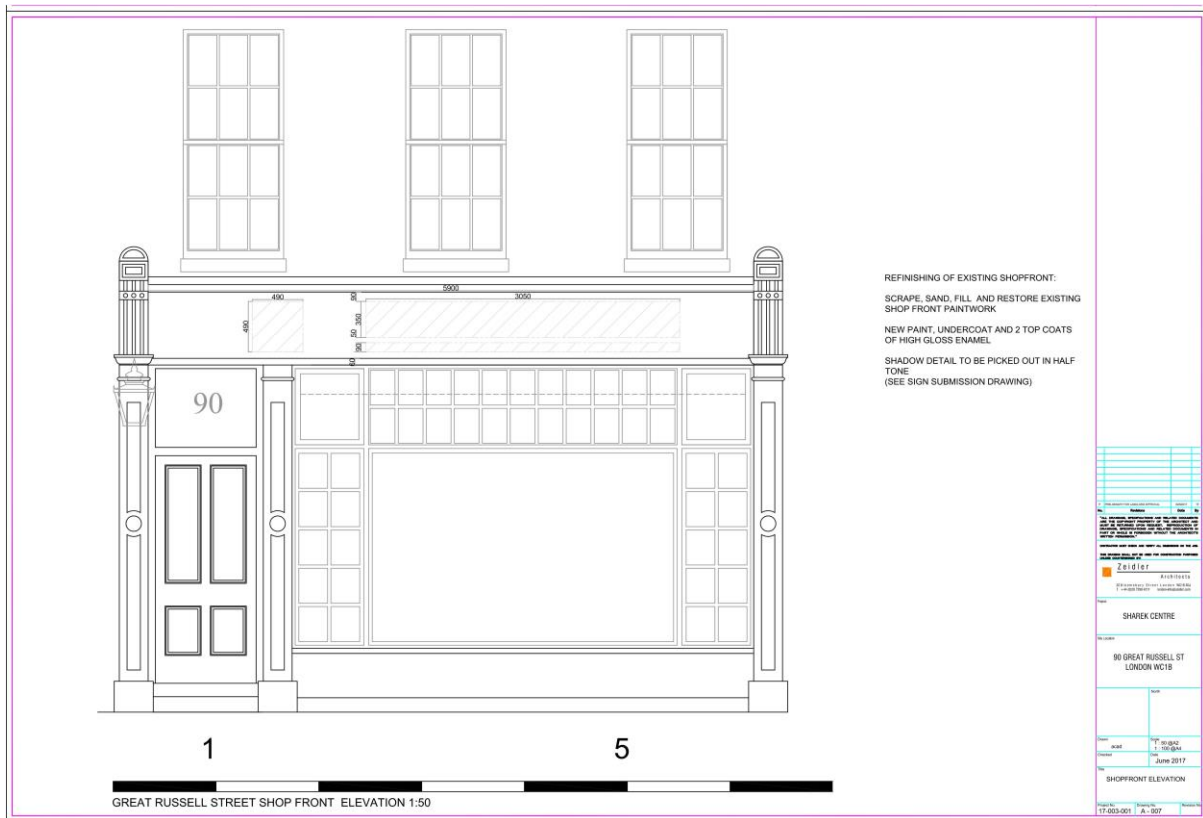
The Building has been Zoned for *D1 Educational* use. The Stafford School of English vacated these premises, 6 weeks ago in mid July 2017.

The *D1 Educational* usage will be continued under the new Sharek Centre for Arabic Language Training. The existing fire and safety provisions for this building will remain unaltered.

The interior is currently being redecorated and re-carpeted for occupancy in mid September.

***This Signage and Advertising Proposal includes:***

- 1) The rubbing down, priming and repainting of the window, entry door, side pilasters and the shopfront. (see colour reference notes below) Note: no redecoration of the façade above the sign fascia is proposed at this stage.
- 2) The removal of an existing applied Lettraset type sign which displays 300mm high large letters adhered to the original sign fascia board.
- 3) This sign will be replaced with a new sign painted insitu by a master signwriter directly onto the existing fascia board.
- 4) The cleaning and restoration of existing brass work on the existing door.
- 5) The cleaning and restoration of the existing Sugg gas lamp
- 6) A modern existing cigarette ash repository mounted at the eastern boundary will be removed.



*Dimensioned Lettering Fields of Proposed Sign*



*Existing door head and Glass Transom Light with gilt address number  
Note: the existing door is not original (- see notes above)*



*Note on Proposed Shopfront Colours:*

- 1) The existing shopfront has been painted grey and shows considerable areas of paint scaling, particularly on the shop window mullion bars.
- 2) Areas of an eye-catching earlier electric blue paint are also evident in areas of abrasion.
- 3) The selected replacement paint colour is a grey green – often referred to as ‘Georgian Green’. An example of this colour can be seen in the doorways to No. 1 Coptic Street at the corner of Gt Russell Street across the street.
- 4) The intention of the colour choice is to provide a calm and discreet character to this shopfront. The building has such a favoured public exposure and the existing shop window is such a superb natural display that a subtle approach to signage and colour treatment will draw sufficient public interest, much as it does in the other antiquarian bookshops and artefact shops along Great Russell Street.
- 5) The sign writing on this sign will be painted directly onto the fascia by a calligraphic artist who will execute the proposed wording in three colours of paint,
  - a. Off white principal letters of 350mm height
  - b. Deep olive-green shadow projections which will provide subtle contrast with the backing colour
  - c. Smaller letters underneath of 90m height in dark olive green
  - d. Gilt insignia highlights. Gold leaf will be applied in the production of the Sharek insignia – the three ‘comma like symbol’ which refers to Arabic speech inflexion marks.
- 6) The new sign will include the words ‘Sharek’ and its translation in Arabic. This lettering is 350mm high.

The inclusion of the Arabic script will enhance a streetscape that has included some of London’s most famed orientalist bookdealers.



*The Proposed paint colour will be similar to the colours recently applied to No. 1 Coptic Street at the corner of Gt Russell Street  
This colour works effectively with the restored brass work on the door of No 90.*



The Existing Ornate Sugg Gas Lamp, bracket and control paraphernalia will be cleaned and restored (though not re-activated)

***Conclusion:***

The scope of proposed works is best described as restoration and redecoration of the existing shop front in employing colours that are typical of the area and providing a new advertising sign on the sign fascia using traditional sign-painting and gilding techniques which are also typical of this area.

***Supervision of Works:***

The works are being supervised by Zeidler Partnership Architects, an international practice with an extensive portfolio of London Projects.

As an architect, the Director, Tam Fairlie, *AADIP RIBA PGCTLA*, has had considerable experience in heritage restoration works in London, including buildings in Trafalgar Sq, Knightsbridge, the Portman Estate, Clerkenwell, Spitalfields and the City of London.

The London Portfolio and c.v. of the director can be reviewed on the website: [www.zeidler.com](http://www.zeidler.com)