

30 Euston Square

*Fire protection for the heritage rooms of
the Royal College of General Practitioners*

Heritage Statement

March 2018

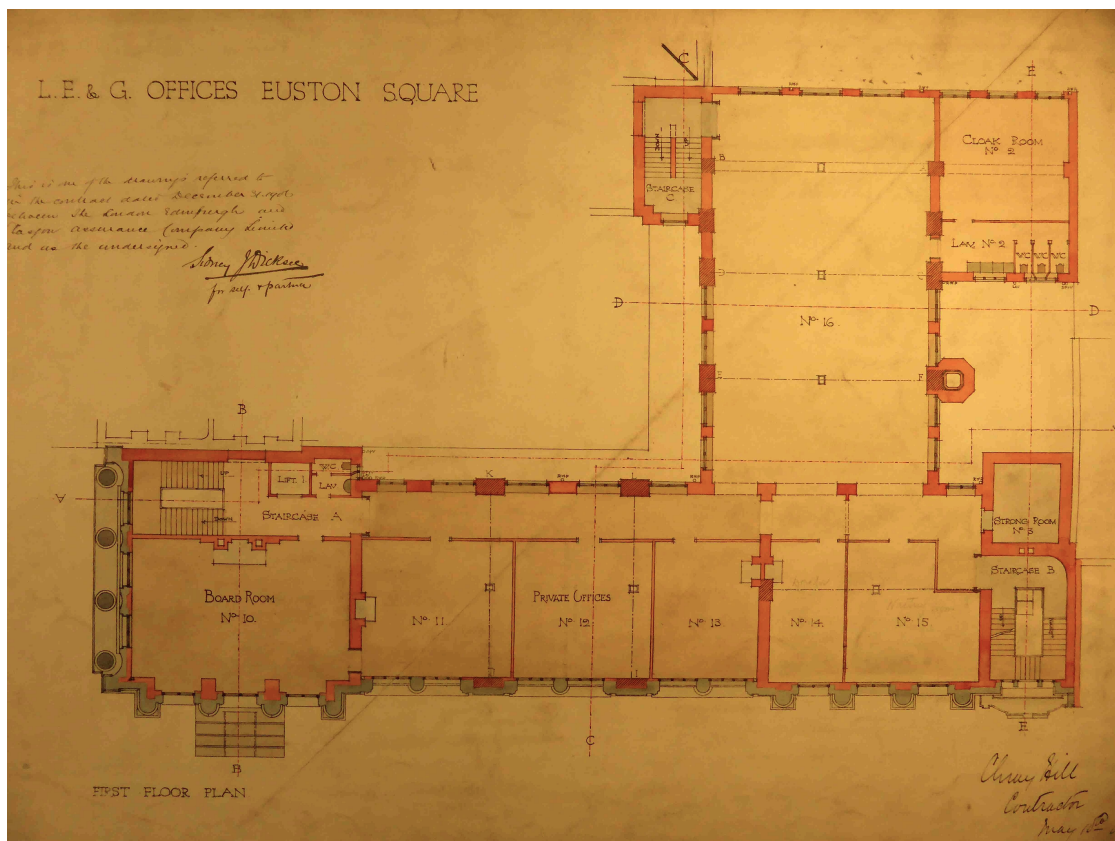


Fig 1. Original drawing by Arthur Beresford Pite (RIBA Drawings Collection)

30 Euston Square - The Royal College of General Practitioners

1-9 Melton Street, London NW1

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1 Circumstances

1.1 proposal overview

Arts Lettres Techniques (ALT) were engaged in August 2017 by the Royal College of General Practitioners to consolidate a Conservation Plan for their headquarters, 30 Euston Square, and to advise on any urgent matters revealed in the course of the research into the plan that may require action prior to the plans publication in May 2018.

The works proposed in this application relate solely to works required to the entrance doors to the highly significant 'Heritage Rooms' on the first floor of the original building by Arthur Beresford Pite, designed and built between 1906-7.

1.2 Historic overview

The architect, Arthur Beresford Pite had a single unifying idea for the building, but through issues of land acquisition the project was delivered in phases, the last of which was completed by another architect shortly before Pite's death. The building, originally 1-9 Melton Street was the headquarters of the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company that specialised in welfare insurance for low-income workers and their families. This single client occupier is significant, as the concept of an occupier who was prepared to invest in their building as a long-term proposition allowed the architect to develop a bespoke language of details for the institution, and to build in a manner that emphasised permanence in both constructional and stylistic terms.

The first section of the building was constructed between 1906 and 1908 from the corner of Euston Road Northwards along Melton Street, creating a façade to the West side of Euston Square. In 1917 a rooftop extension was added by Pite, who again in 1924 created a Northern addition to the Melton Street/Euston Square elevation. In a less well documented extension to the West, Pite developed the depth of the block as additional neighbouring properties were acquired by the client body, evidenced in correspondences between the new building line and previous building plot outlines. This extension completed a sequence of pre-planned lightwell/courtyards within the block that establish a strong interior character through the use of glazed brick for both practical and ornamental purposes.

The first phases of the building are constructed with a combination of loadbearing masonry and steel framing – a contemporary method that the architect resisted for the construction of the elevation but which offered completing time savings and spanning capabilities over previous constructional methods. The 'Dawnay' patent concrete floor system was used between the steel beams. The structural frame defined four large office spaces on each floor, with the faience decoration elaborating the concrete encased ground floor columns. The basement had a clerical and archival use, as well as for the secure storage of money, with the secure doors for this latter requirement still in situ.

The final significant phase of buildings development was by WH Gunton in 1932 using steel framing with hollow pot concrete slabs. Ignoring the Euston Road elevation produced by Pite, Gunton realised a stylistically respectful but aesthetically and constructionally inferior addition Westwards along the Euston Road, connecting to the earlier 1924 extension that formed the elevation to the rear of the urban block on Stephenson Way. A shift in the building line on Euston Road created an opportunity for the final phase of the block development to extend South, creating an awkward re-entrant corner to Euston Road and Melton Street that Gunton's practice failed to resolve adequately.

It is important to note that this period of the building development was not properly defined within the original listing of 1974, in which an extensive description of aspects of the visible interior took precedence over clarifying which parts of the building contributed significance and which did not. The listing itself even misattributes part of the ongoing development of the building to Gunton, where the physical evidence within the building clearly shows otherwise.

The 1974 listing description incorrectly included the north entrance and staircase of 1 Melton Street, effectively listing this twice (Grade II* and as Grade II). A rationalisation of the listing came in 2012, where anomalies concerning significance were removed through applying II* status to the entire length of the Melton Street building and part of the building extension Westwards along Stephenson Way (ref. figs 2 and 3).



Fig 2. Excerpt from English heritage listing 1113131_3



Fig 3. Ground plan – pink listed II*, yellow unlisted

In April 2010 the Building was purchased by the Royal College of General Practitioners.

30 Euston Square is an office building to support the RCGP in its administration of the profession. More than 75% of the net internal area of the building is taken up directly by this usage, including the 'Heritage Rooms', which are bookable meeting rooms in almost constant use.

1.3 Need and justification – adapting to circumstance

The comprehensive refurbishment undertaken in 2012 to bring the Royal College of General Practitioners into 30 Euston Square established a new set of compliant fire compartments throughout the circulation spaces, replacing existing fire doors and in many cases adding partitioning and compliant doors in new settings.



Fig 2. First floor plan of the Grade II* listed building with 'Heritage Room' doors numbered 1-7

Seven doors to habitable rooms were not replaced or upgraded for reasons unknown, however given the originality of the doors and their heritage significance, it can only be presumed that the architects did not feel able to propose alterations that would address the serious issue of fire and smoke resistance while retaining their fabric and appearance. This action is now an institutional priority.



Fig 3. Corridor where the doors are located within the First Floor – doors 2-5 shown right to left

A comprehensive gazetteer of the seven doors concerned is included in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Compliance with a standard equivalent to FD30 (30 minute fire integrity) for doors 1 – 7 inclusive has been stipulated by the Buildings Fire Strategy adviser.

The building operates in a public capacity in that members of the profession, guests and visitors relevant to the work of the College are regular users of these rooms that function as meeting spaces in use throughout the day and on occasion evenings.

2 Criteria for evaluating the proposals

The Grade II* status of the majority of the building requires a careful justification of any proposed alterations to the fabric. Alterations should be proportionate to demonstrable need, and executed in a manner that is ideally reversible, visually sympathetic and effective. The source of the necessity is the urgent requirement to have a compliant fire strategy for the safety of the buildings inhabitants and visitors. The doors themselves have considerable significance.

2.1 Fire Impact

The RCGP has a comprehensive fire compartmentation strategy involving the use of fire curtains to separate the open atria. The heritage rooms for which the doors need upgrading are arranged along the access corridor between Core B and Core C, with compartmentation provided before each stair entry point. Any fire within any one of the heritage rooms must be contained to prevent impact on escape via the corridor to two escape stairs. With extensive historic timber in each room, in the case of 'Princes Gate' it is entirely lined in oak panelling, the requirement for 30 minutes containment is compelling.

2.2 Extent of works required

The gaps around the frame need to be not more than 4mm with 10mm at the threshold. The doors require smoke and intumescent perimeter seals, protection for the lock cases in the event of a fire, with hinges to withstand 800 degrees C.

At present, the gaps between the door leaf and frame vary between no gap (with the door binding on the frame) and 18mm, with the gap to the threshold from nothing to 28mm. The options are therefore to add robust material to either the door leaf edge or the frame.

The lock cases are original and are valuable in heritage terms. The protection of these locks in use is important to the integrity of the doors. The careful insertion of intumescent paper around the lock within the door stile is integral to FD30 compliance.

The hinges are old, although it is clear from the door rebates that they are generally replacements. The degree of wear has contributed to the poor alignment of the doors within their frames, and they are inadequate for either precise service in use or in a fire situation. Modern fire rated hinges will be required to perform as required.

3 Design choices

The priority in specifying a mitigation response to the environmental threat to life posed by fire spread within the building is to establish an intervention that conserves the existing fabric, is technically reversible (although in practice this is undesirable), and is in keeping with the current appearance of the listed building.

3.1 Smoke and intumescent seals

Envirograf provide a perimeter smoke seal with intumescent lining of 1mm thick with an oak veneer facing that provides up to 60 minutes integrity. The surface adhesion of this seal to the door edge avoids the need to rout a groove into the door to insert a channel of intumescent material.



Fig 4. Envirograf product 69 smoke and fire seal

3.2 perimeter gaps

A sympathetic addition to either door or frame is required. The frames are entirely original and have stops that are at the minimum for performing as fire doors. The addition to the frames would therefore require the stops to be extended, being highly visible within the corridor and affecting the presentation of the rooms. The addition of material to the door edges would be unseen from the corridor and if carefully handled would be unnoticeable when the doors are closed. Perimeter edging of varying widths required to fit properly into the frames is described in the accompanying drawings.

3.3 Ironmongery

Original lock cases must be retained in situ, the use of Envirograf intumescant paper wrapping the lock within the door is a standard mechanism for lock protection and its use allows the lock to be retained, with the rebate for the lock needing minimal enlargement to accept the paper wrapping.

The hinges proposed to replace the worn existing items need to be steel to comply with fire standards, however brass plating is available. An antique brass finish on a hinge that has less pronounced knuckle bearings has been chosen to avoid the mistake of highly polished brass that attracts attention, when new hinges ought to visually disappear.

4 Conclusion and proposition

A set of drawings of each door accompany this Heritage Statement and set out the works required to respond to the special status of the doors and the technical requirements of fire compliance:

ES FD02 Door 1 'PRINCES GATE'

ES FD03 Door 2 'IRELAND'

ES FD04 Door 3 'BERESFORD PITE'

ES FD05 Door 4 'ENGLAND'

ES FD06 Door 5 'WALES'

ES FD07 Door 6 'SCOTLAND'

ES FD08 Door 7 'SERVERY'

The compelling, external reason for the application is clear. The means of mitigating against the consequences of fire are sympathetic to the existing condition of the listed building, utilizing technical components that are independently verified for performance and are used extensively on listed and heritage buildings.

The setting of the edging additions from the internal face allows for the worn corner of the doors to remain as found without the necessity to square it up and lose the marks of age. The new oak edging will be treated to bring its colour in line with the original, but the precision of its edges will ensure that it reads as what it is – a technical addition to ensure fire performance and not an original part of the door.

Appendix 1: List description for 1-9 Melton Street/30 Euston Square

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Nos. 1-9 Melton Street and attached railings

List Entry Number: 1113131

Location

Nos. 1-9 Melton Street and attached railings, London Borough of Camden The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 14 May 1974

Date of most recent amendment: 11 January 1999

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

Legacy Number: 477509

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Offices, built 1906-8 as the headquarters of the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company. Architect A Beresford Pite. Builders Foster & Dicksee of Rugby. Carved stonework by Farmer & Brindley. Roof extended 1913 by Pite; extended to rear and to N in 1923, again by Pite. The extension to the west (Nos. 194-8 Euston Road), added in 1932 by WH Gunton, does not form part of this listing.

Reasons for Designation

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

History

This was the national headquarters of the London Edinburgh & Glasgow Assurance Company, which specialised in welfare insurance for low-income workers and their families. The LE&GAC became part of the National Amalgamated Approved Society in 1912, a joint venture by a number of assurance societies, after which the building became the NAAS headquarters. Welfare insurance companies became obsolete following the National Insurance Act (1946) and the advent of the National Health Service (1948), after which the building was acquired by the Government as the premises of the Ministry of National Insurance, and subsequently the Department of Health & Social Security. The LE&GAC building is regarded as the first and only scholarly building in the Greek style since the work of CR Cockerell (1788-1863), and considered to be one of the most important works of the distinguished architect Arthur Beresford Pite (1861-1934). It was intended as the first stage of a much larger scheme with a long elevation in Euston Road, but Pite was not retained to complete the last phase, built in 1932 to the design of WH Gunton (Nos 194-198 Euston Road).

Details

MATERIALS: Load bearing Portland stone and brick masonry; steel and concrete floors; slate roofs; windows steel or timber casements.

PLAN: Comprises a long rectangular block facing E into Euston Square and Melton Street with a short S return into Euston Road, and a deep rear wing on the N side forming an L-plan. The internal plan comprises an entrance hall to the S leading through to a large open L-plan office. The first floor has a board room above the entrance hall, followed by a series of offices along a corridor, and an open-plan office in the rear wing. The floors above have open-plan offices. The attic, which originally contained a club room, dining room and a caretaker's flat, is now open plan. There are 3 stairs: at the rear of the entrance hall serving the Euston Road entrance, with a lift and spiral stair adjacent; in the N entrance bay, and in the SW corner of the rear wing.

EXTERIOR: Four storeys, attic and basement, with rusticated ground floor, an enriched band between ground and first floors and a bracketed cornice at attic level. The front (E) elevation of 1906-8 has 9 principal bays arranged 3-3-3, plus a recessed entrance bay to the N. The piers to the ground-floor flanking bays break forward to form pedestals supporting a giant order of attached fluted Ionic columns in the Bassae order (derived from the interior of the Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae), carrying an entablature breaking forward above the columns. Second-floor windows have roundels on aprons and a moulded band beneath; those to third floor have pediments with keystones. The main entrance in the penultimate bay to the south has a porch with square granite pillars supporting an enriched frieze and segmental hood, and upswept wrought-iron gates attached to piers with cast-iron wreath hinges. The three central bays have paired windows to each bay; those at first and second floors divided by giant order of Ionic columns and set within a moulded frame, with cornice above. The third floor has tripartite windows divided by Ionic columns, flanked by pilasters. The S return to Euston Road is similar to the flanking bays of the main elevation except that the columns support a straight entablature and a pediment, and the first-floor windows have cast-iron balconies. Entrance has glazed timber door with iron grilles. The attic storey, originally rising above the outer flanking bays only, is in the form of an open loggia with Ionic columns. Stonework details are derived from Greek stele heads, sarcophagi and other sepulchral monuments. Above the central bays are three triangular gables, added 1913, each with a Serliana. The N entrance bay has a slightly bowed porch with plain transom and mullion detail, and glazed timber doors with iron grilles. Above, a round-arched recess rises through two floors, with Diocletian windows at top and bottom, and a mezzanine window with paired round arches separated by an Ionic half-column. This bay terminates with a complex attic feature with three small rectangular windows, a tiny Diocletian window and plain transoms and mullions.

The 1923 extension, also designed in the Greek idiom, is 3 storeys plus a set-back attic and a mansard roof. Facade of 2 bays, with pilastered ground-floor windows; upper-floor windows are set under broken pediments with stylised Ionic drops to the upper floors, separated by roundel spandrel panels.

INTERIOR: The entrance hall has a glazed timber lobby in the form of a kiosk with canted sides (glazing replaced), antefixae and an urn finial. The walls and ceiling are lavishly finished in green and cream Doulton Parian ware tiles with moulded relief patterns, the ceiling has elongated console brackets. The elaborate tiled chimneypiece has a black marble moulded surround and black and white tiled slips and fireback; the overmantel has three roundels with the arms of London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, surmounted by a stylised Greek entablature and pediment with antefixae. The black and white mosaic floor is laid out in grid pattern with large central roundel of guilloches containing the 12 signs of the zodiac, in centre of which a roundel of letters reads "Founded Anno Domini MDCCCLXXXI" encircling the intertwined initials LEG'. A black marble wall tablet records names of company members who fell in the Great War. A pair of arches leads through to the office, which has a beamed plaster ceiling supported on series of paired arches clad in green and white relief tiles, similar to entrance hall. The walls are clad in brown and dark yellow tiles to dado height, and cream and yellow tiles above. The first-floor offices have oak panelled doors with pedimented architraves. The board room has three-quarter height oak panelling, a coffered plaster ceiling and ribbed frieze, and a handsome chimneypiece in the Greek style with white marble surround and yellow and black marble slips, by Farmer & Brindley. Windows are set into arched recesses. Two other offices have oak chimneypieces. There are glazed doors to either end of the corridor. The rear wing has green and cream tiled piers and brown tiled dados, matching those to ground floor office; the third floor also has these features. The attic storey has no original features except for one fireplace. The S stair has a closed string, carved drop finials, heavy handrail and turned balusters, and unusual newel posts in form of fluted obelisks. The inner string has brown and yellow tiling. The N stair has a close string and elongated finials with rounded caps, and triangular stick balusters set in groups of three; the SW stair has a simple handrail attached to the wall; both stairwells are clad in bands of banded brown and cream glazed bricks. The N extension has no interior features of interest.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: Elaborate iron railings with Ionic column piers on low plinth. Euston Road entrance has stone gate piers with anthemion heads and iron gates of similar design to the main entrance porch; gates also to N entrance.

Appendix 2:

Historic England pre-application advice page 1 of 2



LONDON OFFICE

Mr Alan Chandler
Arts lettres techniques limited
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Direct Dial: 07990 339977

Our ref: PA00736507

27 March 2018

Dear Mr Chandler

Pre-application Advice

ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, 30 EUSTON SQUARE (FORMERLY 1-9 MELTON STREET), LONDON NW1 2FB

Thank you for inviting Historic England to engage in pre-application discussions relating to the above site.

Advice

The Royal College of General Practitioners, 30 Euston Square, is a Grade II* listed building with a very high degree of special architectural and historic interest. It is a distinctive Edwardian office building designed in a scholarly and inventive Greek manner with high-quality materials and detailing. It is a major work by the distinguished architect A. Beresford Pite, the first section of which was built in 1906-8 as the headquarters of the London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Assurance Company. Extensions to the roof (1913) and to the rear and to the north (1923) were added by Pite, and to the west (1932, now nos. 194-8 Euston Road) were added by WH Gunton; the latter is not considered to be of special interest.

The proposals are for minor alterations to seven original doors to the first floor suite of 'Heritage Rooms' to upgrade their fire and smoke resistance to comply with a standard equivalent to FD30 (30 minute fire integrity). The proposals include the installation, where required, of oak additions to perimeter gaps and intumescent perimeter fire and smoke seals to doors and clear intumescent varnish applied to the door face. Hinges are proposed to be replaced with fire compliant fittings. Original locks and cover plates are to be retained.

We consider that the proposals are a practical solution that will retain the original fabric and appearance of the doors and result in minimum intervention. The interventions are justified by the need to have a compliant fire strategy for the whole building. We



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Historic England will use the information provided by you to evaluate any applications you make for statutory or quasi-statutory consent, or for grant or other funding. Information provided by you and any information obtained from other sources will be retained in all cases in hard copy form and/or on computer for administration purposes and future consideration where applicable.



LONDON OFFICE

welcome that the proposed oak edging to perimeter gaps has been set back from the door face, which will preserve the patina of the corners and edges. The proposals would preserve the significance of this Grade II* listed building in line with paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Next Steps

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. We note that these works have been submitted for consideration alongside the production of a Conservation Management Plan, following recommendations Historic England made whilst attending a site visit in 2017. We are very supportive of this holistic approach to the careful management of this highly significant building and would be happy to engage further with you regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Freeman".

Sarah Freeman
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas
E-mail: sarah.freeman@historicengland.org.uk

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, 30 EUSTON SQUARE
(FORMERLY 1-9 MELTON STREET), LONDON NW1 2FB
Pre-application Advice**

List of information on which the above advice is based

Draft Design and Access Statement; draft Heritage Statement; proposed drawings and product specifications.



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