

**Royal College of Physicians - Donor Wall  
Listed Building Consent Application**

**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**Introduction**

This statement supports a Listed Building Consent application for a new donor wall to the entrance area of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) at 11 St Andrews Place, London. The Royal College of Physicians Building is an important Grade 1 listed building, of national significance.

**Character and Architectural / Historical Interest**

One of the greatest modern buildings of post-war London, the Royal College of Physicians is perhaps the finest among those designed by Denys Lasdun.

The three parts of the building - a ceremonial block, concrete covered in porcelain mosaic tiles, an auditorium made of blue engineering brick - heavy and half sunk in the ground and an administration block are situated around a courtyard. This organic organisation responds to the place and adapts to its context. Here, Lasdun's interest in the analogy between architecture, its organisation and nature is most apparent.

The key built features of No. 11 St. Andrews Place, which make up its special architectural and historic interest can be described as Character Defining Elements (CDEs). An understanding of these and recognition of their significance is essential for ensuring their retention, thus preserving the overall heritage value of the site.

The following are considered to be the Character Defining Elements for the building:

1. Pure, strongly horizontal, rectangular and sometimes cantilevered forms;
2. Glazed base to West façade;
3. Twin "piloti" to West façade;
4. Indented string courses defining bands of slit windows;
5. Vertical columns;
6. Mosaic Tiles;
7. Shadow gaps defining external soffits and internal separation of surfaces;
8. Baggerbridge engineering bricks to Albany Street façade and Wolfson Theatre;
9. Horizontal window bands to Albany Street façade over solid brick base;
10. Original joinery including bookcases within the Dorchester Library;
11. Spiral staircase to Wolfson Theatre
12. Collection of historic paintings, silverware and apothecary jars;
13. Hardwood Floors;
14. Marble Central Hall with staircase;
15. Mezzanine balconies.

*References:*

- *Barnabas Calder, Denys Lasdun's Royal College of Physicians: A monumental act of faith, 2008*
- *Alvin Boyarsky, 'The architecture of etcetera' in the Architectural Design, June, 1965, pp. 268-270*
- *RCP HERITAGE GUIDANCE PLAN, October 2014*

## **Justification for Proposed Development**

In 2018 the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) celebrates the 500th anniversary of its founding. To honour the achievements of 500 years of medicine, and to create a lasting legacy for the future, the college is initiating a fundraising appeal using the new Linacre donor Wall.

Thomas Linacre's mission was 'giving health' to the world and the wall is a physical monument to his efforts. All those who have their name – or that of a loved one or esteemed colleague - inscribed on the wall, are making an enduring impact on the physicians, patients and medical profession of the future.

## **Impact on Special Interest of Listed Building**

The RCP already includes several museum and display areas, of which the donor wall will be a new addition. The location of the wall conceals an area of existing engineering brickwork, but does not compromise any architectural features. No elements are being removed or replaced; the proposal is essentially the installation of another display area. The wall can be removed in the future with no discernible impact on the existing building. For this reason, it is not considered detrimental to the special interest of the building or its listing.

## **Avoiding / Minimising Adverse Impacts**

The donor wall has been designed to compliment the architecture and materials. The brick-like organisation of place-names refers thematically to the brick wall behind. The dark metal used for the shelving draws on the dark quality of the engineering bricks behind and opposite.

There are no fixings to the marble floor and minimal fixings into the existing wall behind. These fixings will be into the mortar joints, to avoid impact on the bricks themselves. High-level fixings are into a standard suspended MF plasterboard ceiling, which can easily be replaced.

The design aims to minimise the depth of the wall to avoid intruding into the corridor space. The Linacre portrait to the centre will be prepared, protected and displayed by specialist curators as per conservation and heritage requirements.

## **Sources / Expertise Consulted**

The design of the wall has been developed with specialist fabricators and installers The Hub. The company has vast experience working within listed buildings and around historic features. The resulting detailed design is as sympathetic as possible to the existing wall and surrounds. Specialist curators and portrait hangers have been involved in the portrait display element.

We have also submitted proposals to Historic England in advance of this application for pre-application feedback. The response was as follows:

*“Having reviewed the information provided by you, we conclude that this proposal would lead to an application for which Historic England would be a statutory consultee. It is not possible or necessary for us to engage with every proposal that affects the historic environment at pre-application stage. In this instance we do not consider it necessary for us to participate in pre-application discussions. If, as the scheme develops, there are material changes to the proposals which would affect the historic environment, please consult us again.”*