



Senate House Railings  
London  
**DRAFT**

University of London  
UOL03

Prepared by ADP / May 2018

**Heritage  
Assessment**



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Report sign off:

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University of London			

Report prepared by:

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Revisions:



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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK, and the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services has also increased. This is a reflection of the fact that mental health problems are becoming more common, and that more people are seeking help for their mental health problems.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more accessible. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that mental health services are now available in a wider range of settings, and that there is a greater emphasis on community care.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more effective. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on evidence-based practice, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of psychological therapies.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more cost-effective. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on the use of generic services, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of self-help resources.

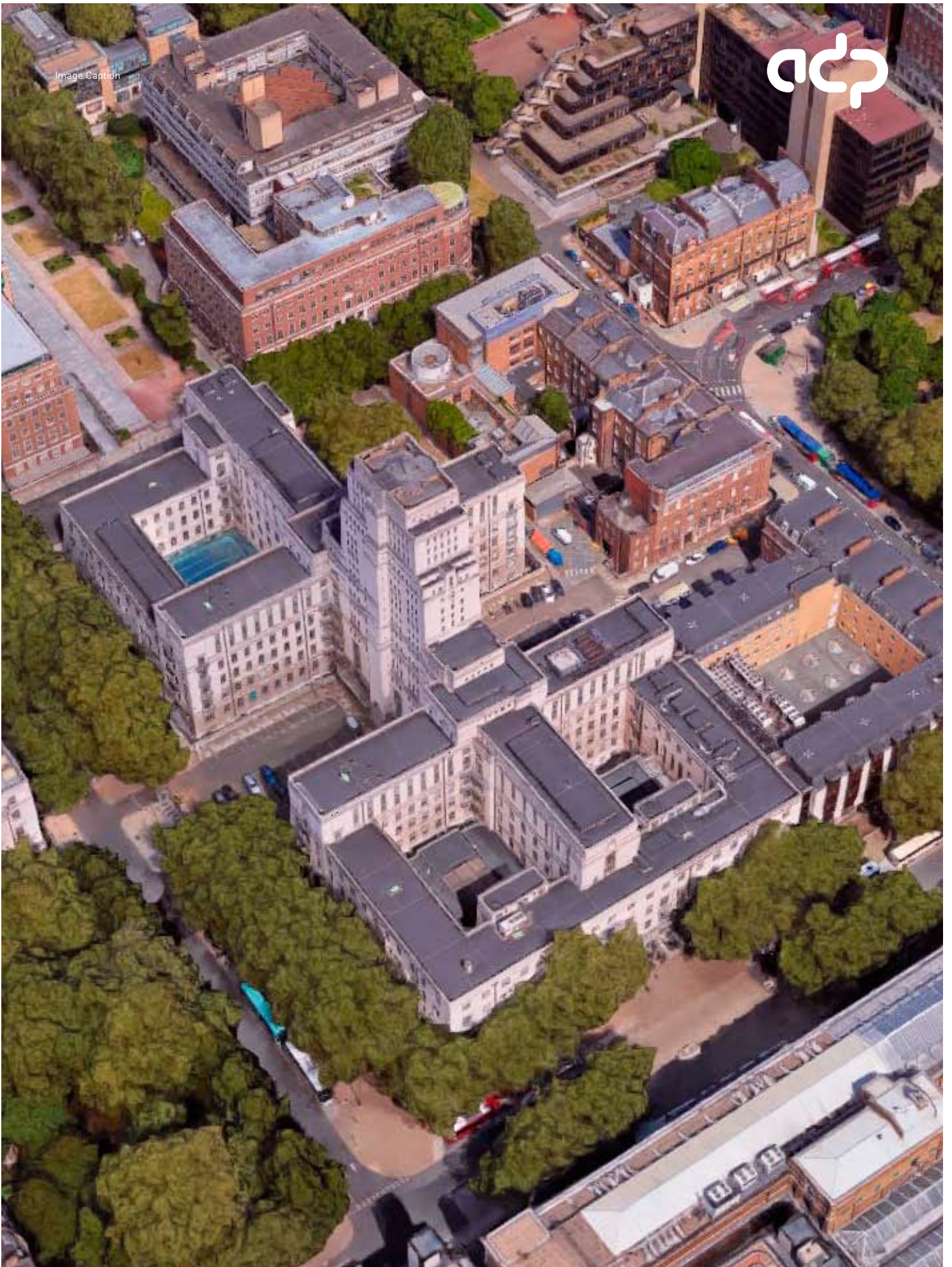
The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more user-friendly. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on the use of plain language, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of user-friendly materials.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more culturally sensitive. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on the use of culturally sensitive materials, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of culturally sensitive services.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more accessible to people from ethnic minority groups. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on the use of interpreters, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of culturally sensitive services.

The increase in the number of people with a mental health problem who are in contact with mental health services is also a reflection of the fact that mental health services are becoming more accessible to people with learning disabilities. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that there is a greater emphasis on the use of plain language, and that there is a greater emphasis on the use of user-friendly materials.

Image Caption



# 01 Introduction

## 01.1 BACKGROUND TO THE HERITAGE STATEMENT

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ADP was appointed by the University of London in April 2018 to produce a short Heritage Statement for the railings attached to Senate House in Bloomsbury, London. This is required to support a listed building application to refurbish and restore the railings.

Senate House and the attached railings are listed Grade II\*. Senate House was design by Charles Holden and constructed between 1932 and 1938

## 01.2 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE HERITAGE STATEMENT

This Heritage Statement has been produced to provide sufficient information to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF Brief for Heritage Statements as required for applications for planning permission that affect a heritage asset.

Photographs contained in this report (where no source is given) are those of the authors. Sources are provided for all other photographs and images, the copyright of which may remain with the original author. This report should therefore not be used for any purpose that may infringe the original copyright.

This Statement will cover the following:

- » description of location, setting, use, form, fabric and
- » brief architectural history of the building
- » biographical details of the original architect
- » professional assessment of significance

This document is not a condition survey or a full conservation management plan and should not be used as such.



Above\_South Elevation onto Montague Place (ADP, 2018)

## 01.3 KEY PLAN

Senate House is located within the centre of London, on Malet Street in Bloomsbury. The area has a high number of listed buildings and buildings noted as having a positive impact on the Conservation Area.

The key below shows the location of the Senate House buildings in the centre of the plan and the attached railings in a dashed red line.

KEY	
	Grade 1 listed building
	Grade 2* listed building
	Grade 2* listed attached railings
	Grade 2 listed building
	Grade 2 listed railings
	'Positive Building' in the Conservation Area
	Sub Area within the Bloomsbury Conservation

Key plan showing listed buildings and Bloomsbury Conservation (sub) Area



## 01.4 STATUTORY CONTEXT

### Legislative Framework / Planning Policy

Buildings which are listed or which lie within a conservation area are protected by law. The primary legislation is provided in England and Wales by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These acts set out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect buildings. Secondary guidance on the application of the Acts is provided in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It should be noted that a Draft of a new NPPF is currently under consultation until 10th May, however the draft plan does not substantially alter the requirements.

Tertiary guidance is given at local level in the form of the Camden Local Plan 2017 and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area appraisal.

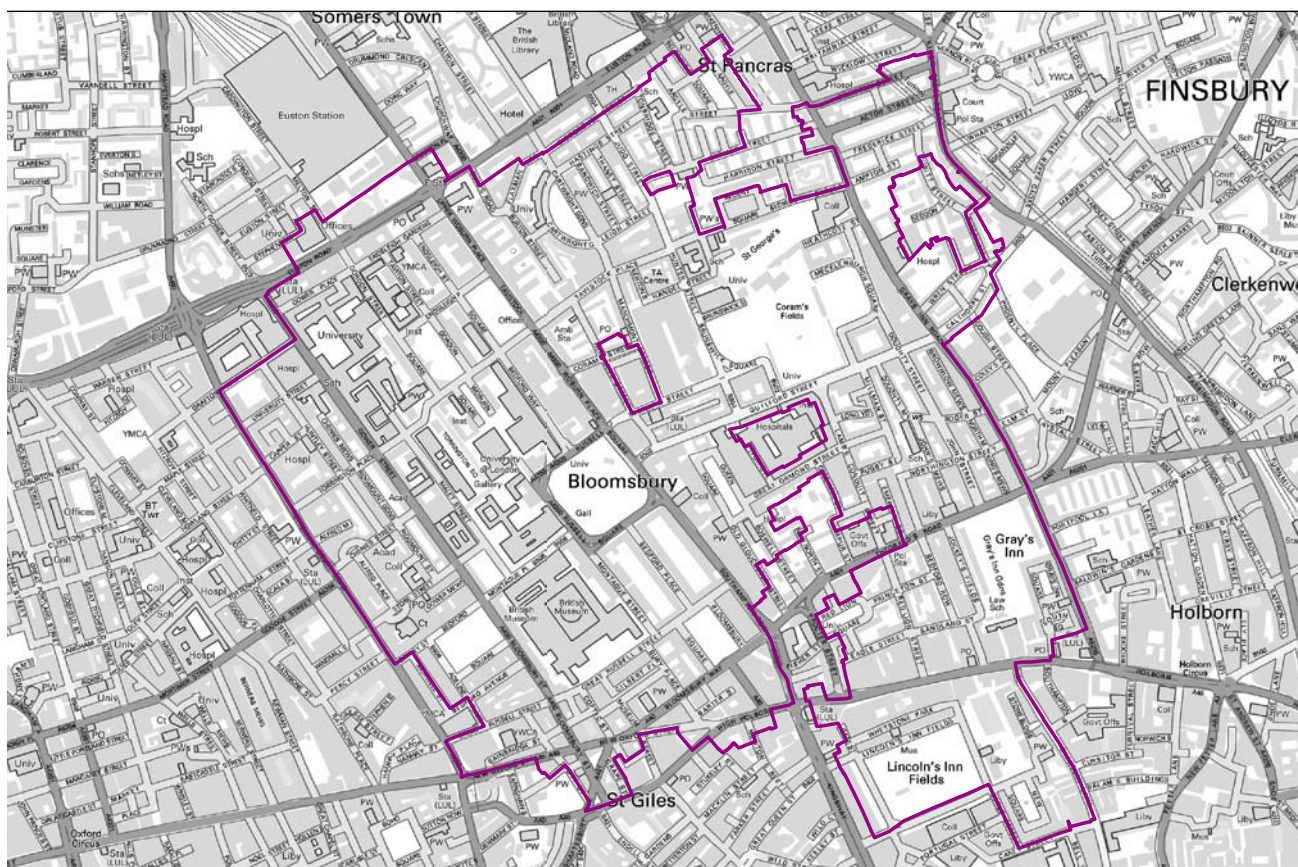
### The National Planning Policy Framework

NPPF Policy 128 includes the following requirement:

*'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.'*

### Conservation Areas

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Senate House and its attached railings lie within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (see map below), and in sub area 3.



**Bloomsbury CA**



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#Map for Internal Use Only#

Print Date: 10/05/2013



Scale 1: Not Usable Scale

Printed By: L.Small

Map Ref No: c03632





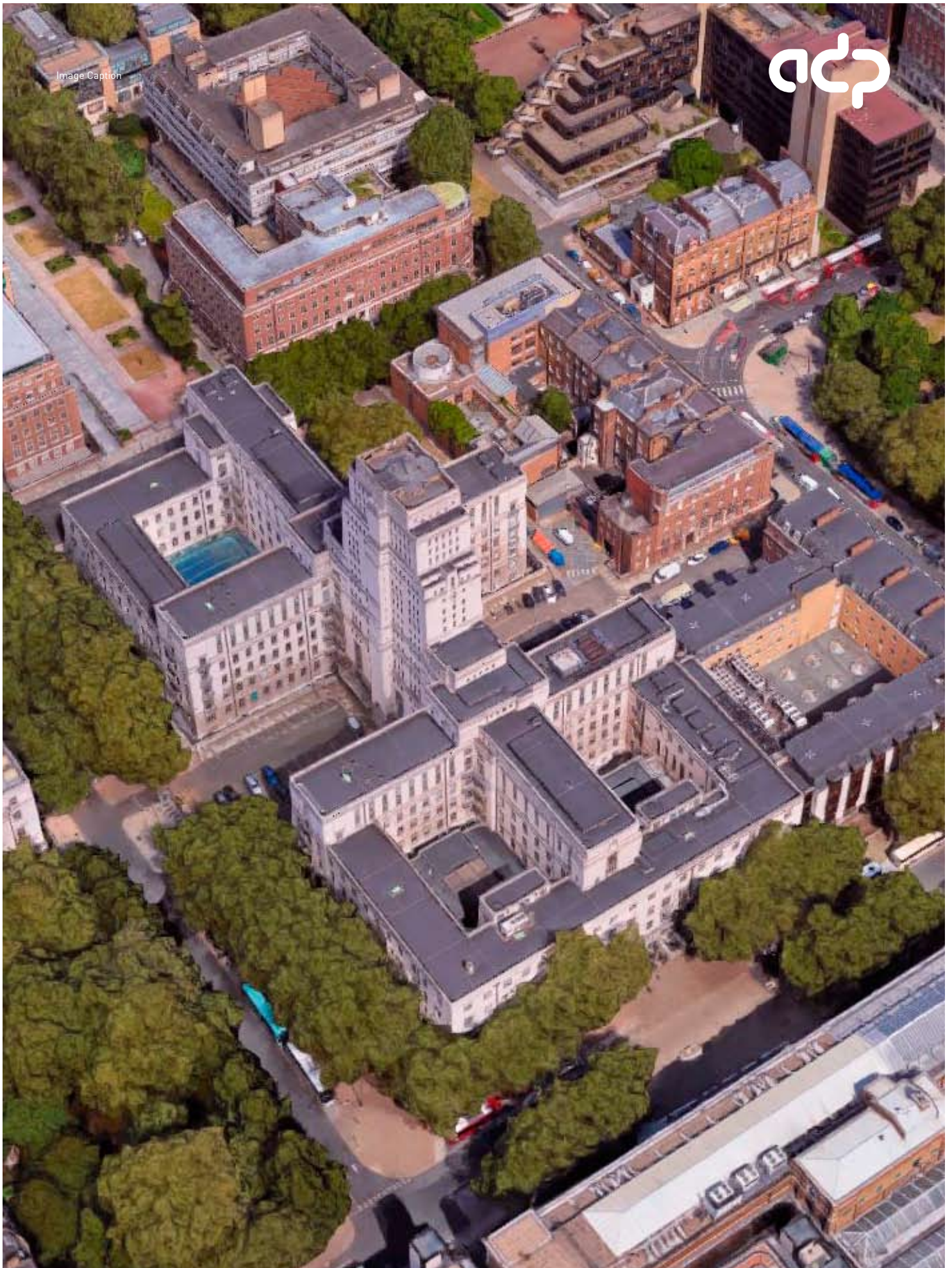
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## Listed Buildings

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

The grading of a building in the statutory lists defines the building as being of National importance. Grades I and II\* are only a small percentage of listed buildings (about 6% across England and Wales) and are of particular importance to our built heritage; their significance being generally beyond dispute. Grade II buildings are of a lesser individual significance but constitute the majority of the historic environment and therefore their protection is equally important if the wider historic environment is to be protected. It is important to note that the statutory controls apply equally to all grades of listing.

Image Caption



## 02 Understanding & Assessment of the Historic Asset

## 02.3 THE ARCHITECT

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Charles Henry Holden was born in 1875 in Bolton. He is best known for designing many London Underground stations during the 1920s and 1930s, for Bristol Central Library, the Underground Electric Railways Company of London's headquarters at 55 Broadway and for Senate House.

After working and training in Bolton and Manchester, Holden moved to London. His early buildings were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, but for most of his career he championed an unadorned style based on simplified forms and massing that was free of what he considered to be unnecessary decorative detailing. Holden believed strongly that architectural designs should be dictated by buildings' intended functions. After the First World War he increasingly simplified his style and his designs became pared-down and modernist, influenced by European architecture. He was a member of the Design and Industries Association and the Art Workers' Guild. He produced complete designs for his buildings including the interior design and architectural fittings.

Holden was selected by the University, in 1931, largely on the strength of his previous work for London Underground, especially their headquarters at St James', completed in 1930. The cruciform plan of this building, culminating in a stepped tower and the stripped classical detailing and monumental character, also expressed in his earlier work for the Imperial War Graves Commission, are clearly reflected and developed in his designs for Senate House. His subsequent work was also influenced by a study tour of modern buildings in northern Europe, which Holden made, with representatives of London Underground, in the summer of 1930.

This text is taken from a BDP report written for the University dated 2006 and the Listed Building Management guidelines from 2015 by AHP Architects

## 02.1 SENATE HOUSE

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The University of London was founded by Royal Charter in 1836 and is the third oldest University in England.

The University was located in many different buildings in London before the construction of Senate House in the mid 1930s. In 1909, The Haldan Commission was set up to examine the University's structure. In 1911, the Commission declared that the University needed to be located in a more central location. The site was acquired by the University in 1927 for a new administrative and library building, Senate House.

Charles Holden won the commission for Senate House over Sir Giles Scott and others on the success of the London Transport Headquarters. Holden's original 1931 plan was for a dominating series of buildings marching from the British Museum to Byng Place comprising 17 court-yards and 2 towers. It would have dominated the Bloomsbury area and much of west end and central London and would have taken over two decades to complete. The first part of the scheme for Senate House as built today was approved in 1932. By 1937, all the other plans had been abandoned.

At the time, this was probably the most significant building in London; it was the tallest except for St. Paul's Cathedral and was referred to as 'London's first skyscraper.' Even today, it is still a dominating and impressive building in the west end of London. In an era when London struggled with landmark architecture, Senate House was considered a success upon completion. Lord Macmillan flippantly offered a vote of thanks to Holden at the RIBA in 1938 decreeing that, *'this is almost the only building in London which has ever been erected without an acrimonious correspondence in The Times!'*

Externally, the building is dominated by the tower in the centre sat upon a base of four larger floors. The granite ground floor façade gives the building a sense of everlasting existence. The proportions of solid Portland Stone to fenestration openings has a simple regimented rhythm

which is enhanced by the simple detailing, with all the unnecessary complications of the Classic architecture removed.

Senate House embodies Holden's beliefs in what architecture should be and his interpretation thereof; minimalism, form being driven by function, flexibility and the eradication of ornamentation. Holden summarised much of his beliefs on architecture by in saying;

*"I discovered the significance of form as distinct from the tricks of architectural ornament. The building would take on a character of its own often requiring little in the way of embellishment and finally confirmed my slogan 'when in doubt leave it out'...I don't seek for a style, either ancient or modern. I want an architecture which is through and through a good building. A building planned for a specific purpose, constructed in the method and use of materials, old or new, most appropriate to the purpose the building has to serve."*

(The Kind of Architecture we want in Britain, Charles Holden, 1957)



Above\_ Undated photograph of Senate House from the South West

## 02.1 SENATE HOUSE

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Holden was a visionary in nearly all aspects of his architecture and Senate House is no exception. Within the original brief prepared for the University in 1929, it stipulated that there should be appropriate allowances for future expansion and therefore flexibility. One of the key elements of a building's ability to be flexible is the ability for the services supply to be adapted without the need for extensive and expensive alterations to the building. Holden's response to this was to create floor plates that had the flexibility to be arranged in whatever the required lay-out was at any given time.

The exterior of Senate House is designed with a restricted palette of high quality materials, reductive detailing and lack of ornament. There is a symmetrical composition of the blocks and tapering profile of the tower. There are significant views of the building from neighbouring streets and in distant views.

The elevations have a repetitive rhythm, pattern and proportion of the metal framed windows and doors. A glazed 'slot' at the junction between the north and south blocks with the tower has been created by the large multi-paned windows with semi-circular heads.

The exterior has balconies with painted wrought iron balustrades that coordinate with the main railings. Cast lead rainwater hoppers and down pipes with gilded crest and dates. Decorative cast and gilded spandrel panels and backlit canopies on the tower

This text is taken from a BDP report written for the University dated 2006 and the Listed Building Management guidelines from 2015 by AHP Architects



Above\_Senate House onto Malet Street showing balustrades to balconies

## 02.2 THE RAILINGS

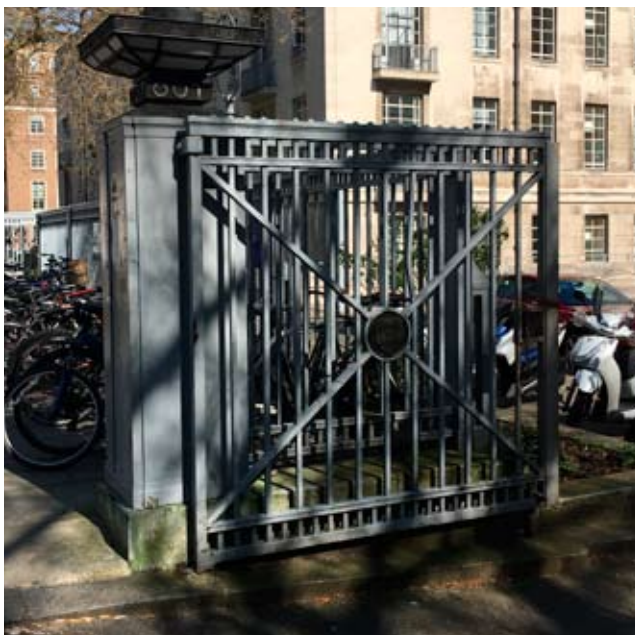
Senate House is enclosed by low parapet walls around the basement areas and around the external perimeter. These were erected between 1932 and 1934. The railings are painted wrought iron with gates with stone piers and sleeper walls enclosing areas of grass and ground cover planting.

The design of the railings is completely in harmony with the design of the building. The main railings are simple vertical rails with top and bottom pairs of rails connected with short posts at double the frequency of the main rails. Linking section are square section posts with a simple circle and diamond motif running up each face. Gates have a cross bracing detail with a central circular bronze University coat of Arms (formed of a cross with the Union rose irradiated with the Imperial Crown above it; above this is an open book with clasps).

Gates are fixed to imposing gate posts - square in plan with the circle/diamond motif and each topped with a large lamp and IN or OUT signage. The lamps are white opalesque glass in a bronze framework with a rope and flower moulding on the face.

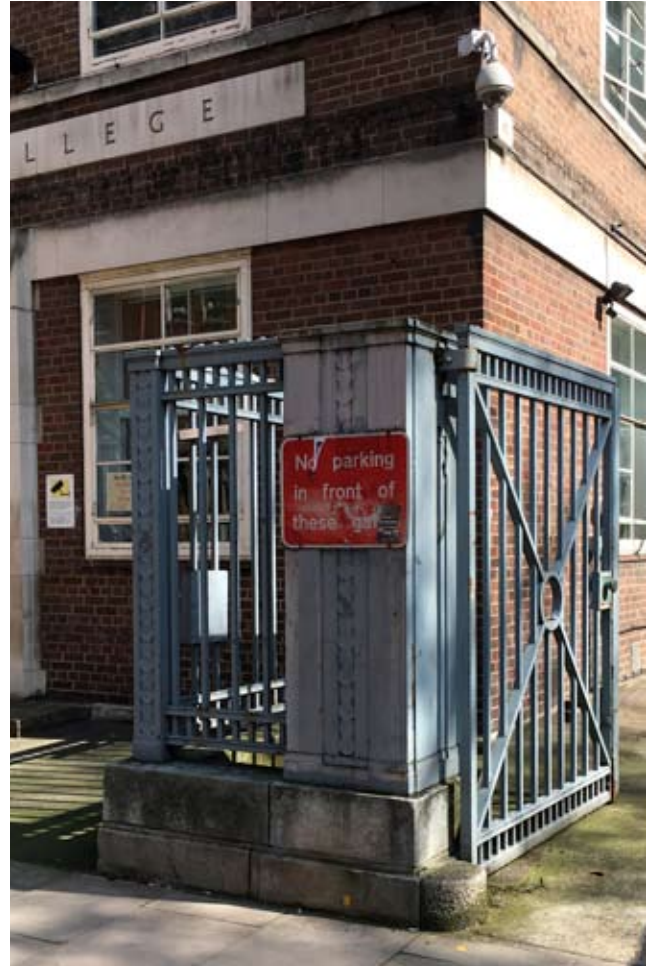
Additional rails have been added where necessary to comply with current H&S requirements. Painted iron lamp standards, some replicas of original fittings, others modern. The railings have been painted with gloss oil paint; in a mid grey (BS 00A09, RAL 7037, or equivalent) gloss oil paint.

The University undertook a paint analysis of the in October 2016. The conclusion was that railings had not been painted for about fourteen years. The report notes the ironwork has been painted on fifteen occasions since 1932. Grey has always been employed, and the full range of that colour has been used, from dark greenish greys to lighter bluish grey and a couple of noticeably pinkish greys. Until about 2002 they were painted on a fairly regular basis, even allowing for the interruption of the War. The full report is available on request.



Above\_Gates on Malet Street and detail of Coast of Arms

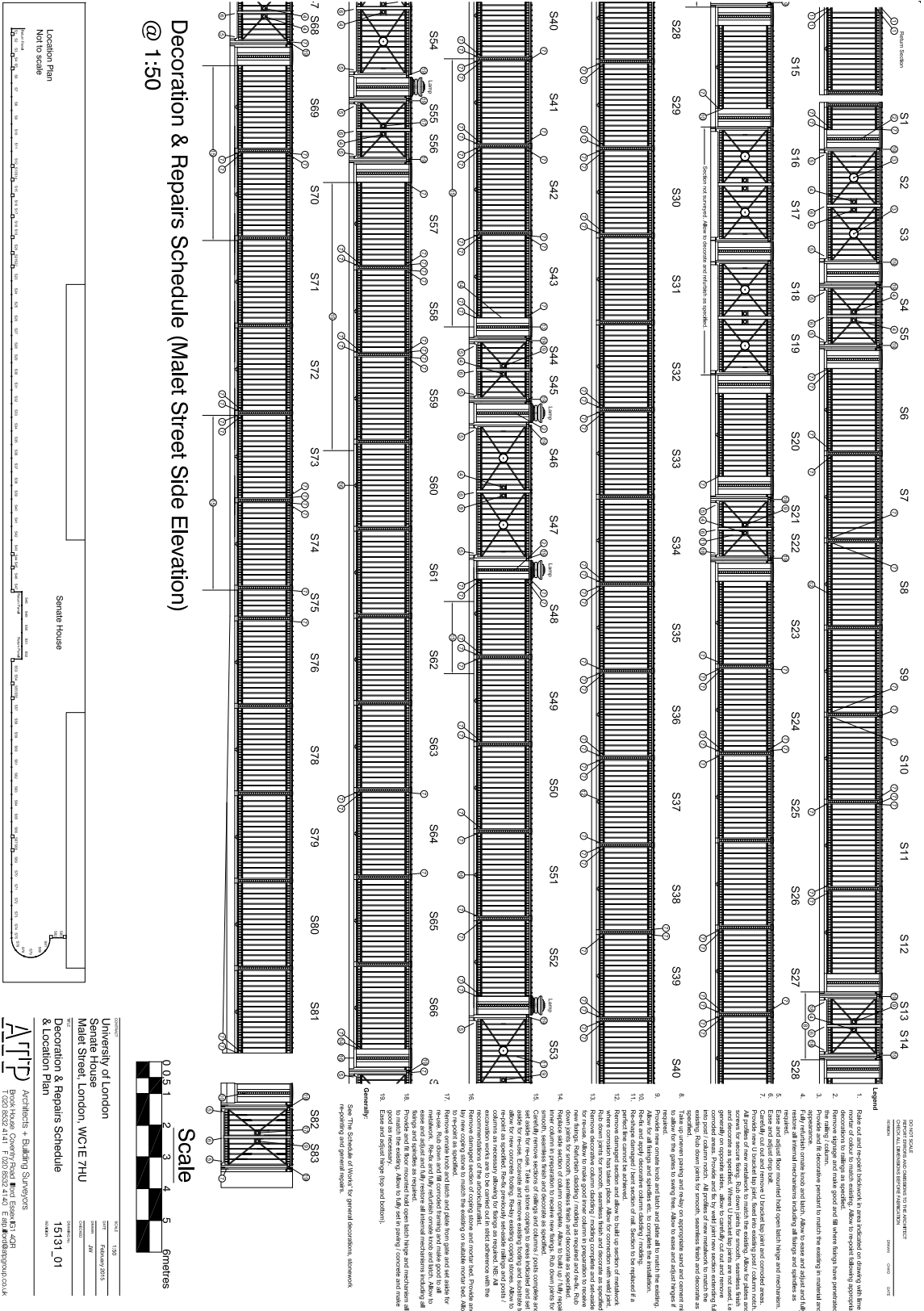
## 02.2 THE RAILINGS



Above\_Clockwise: Main Gates on Malet Street; Secondary gates on Malet Street; lamp to top of gate post, circular and diamond motif to posts



## 02.2 THE RAILINGS



**Decoration & Repairs Schedule (Malet Street Side Elevation)**  
@ 1:50

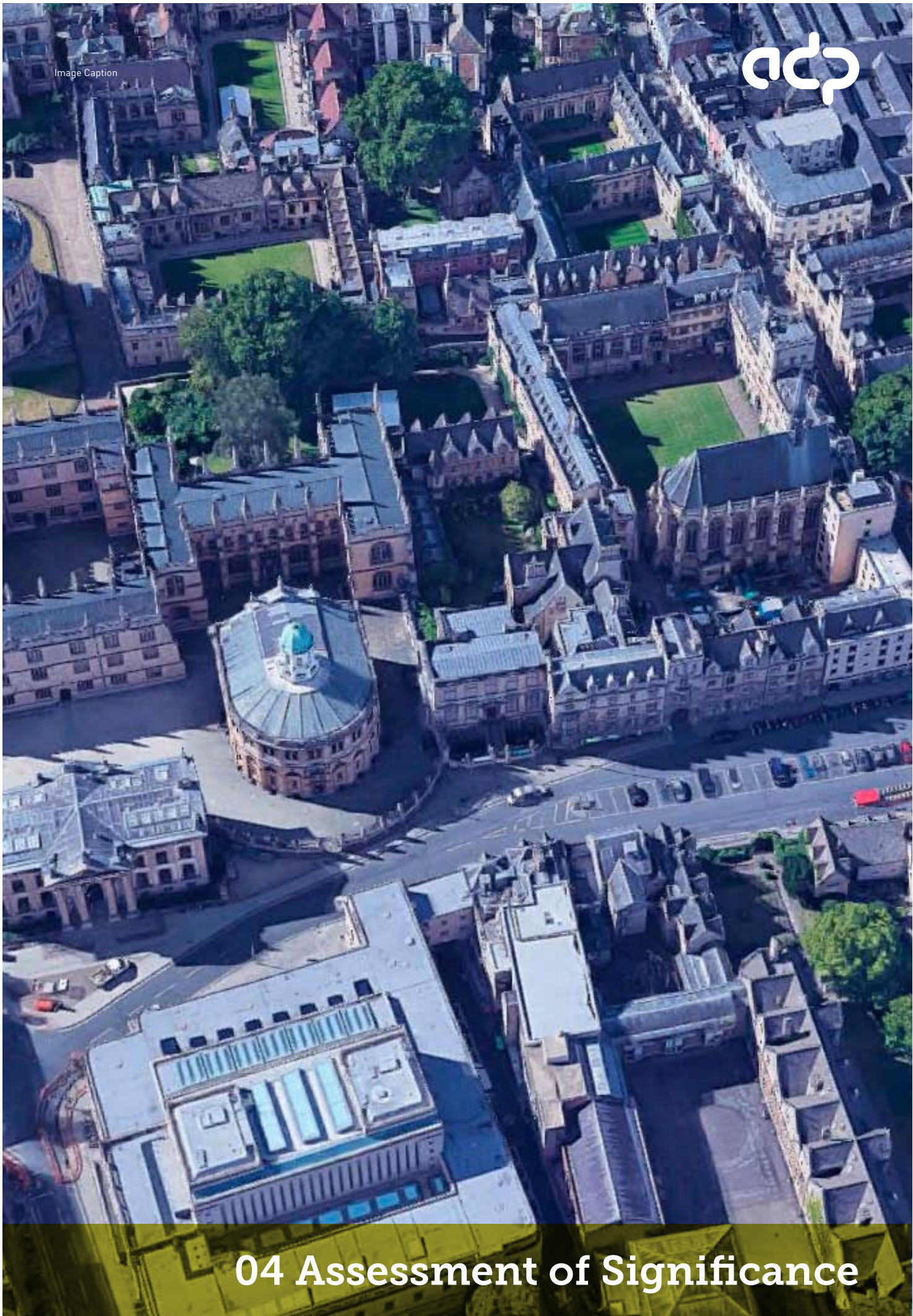
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
Senate House  
Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU

Architects & Building Surveyors  
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## 04 Assessment of Significance

## 04.1 OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE

### Significance

Historic England identifies four heritage values that should be considered when addressing the significance of historic buildings. These values recognise that a place can be understood as significant for different reasons, and looks to establish a framework to ensure consistency in how our heritage is being assessed. These terms are not mutually exclusive and there are overlaps when considering each of the terms. These four values are Evidential Value, Historical Value, Aesthetic Value and Communal Value. The Museum of the History of Science has value in all the four categories and is a very significant historic asset.

Senate House itself has national significance in primarily Aesthetic Value. The conservation management Guidelines should be consulted for full details.

The Railings are part of the overall Senate House composition and are included in the listing and so have commensurate significance to the building.

Their complimentary design and clear relationship with the building makes them very much part of the setting of the building and they should be protected and conserved.

### Issues and Potential Vulnerabilities

The key issues of vulnerability arise primarily from decay of the cast iron which is gradually reducing the fabric of the railings and will ultimately cause them to fail. Ironmongery and locks are failing and some gates are locked with heavy chains and padlocks.

The programme of works to restore the railings is important to preserve them for future generations. They should be conserved by a specialist cast iron sub-contractor to restore and replace sections where necessary. It is likely that the extent of work necessary will not be evident until it is started as existing paint layers are no doubt holding elements together.

Appropriate paint specification should be used for the material. Colour should be sensitive to the original colour palette and not mimic colour schemes of earlier periods.

Ironmongery should be repaired where possible or replaced with ironmongery to match in appearance.

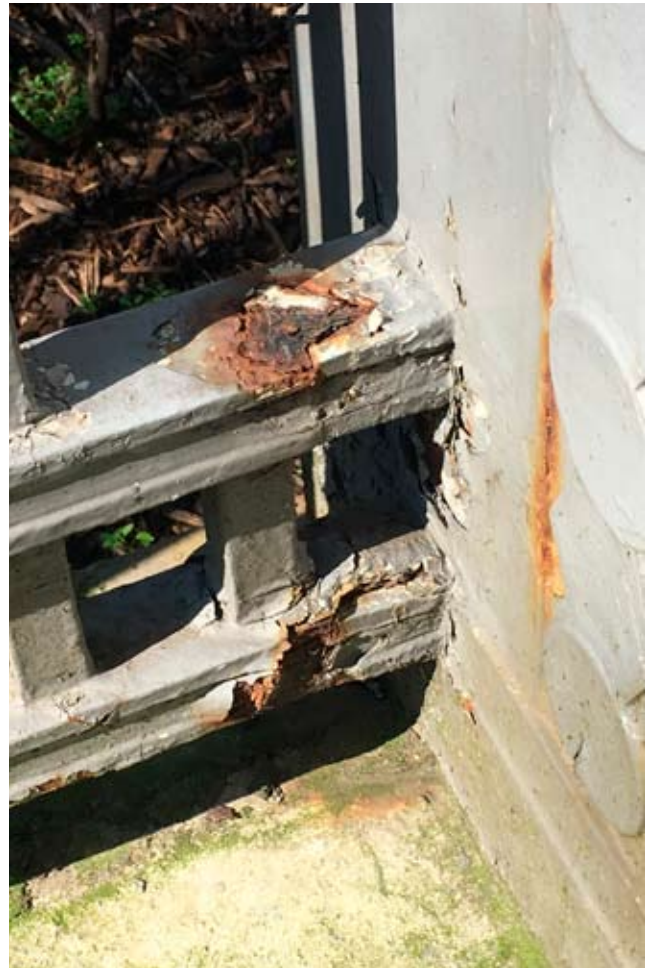
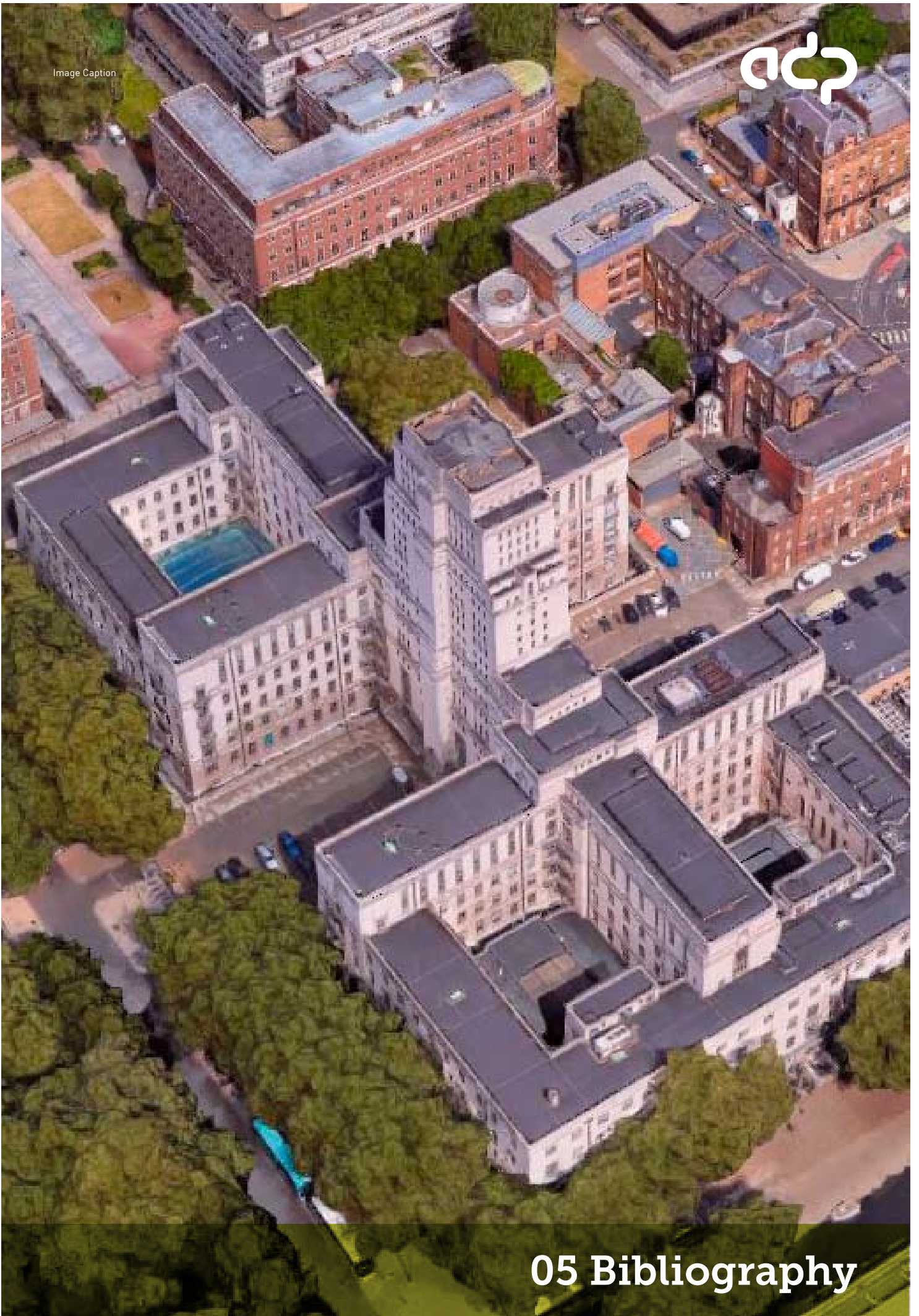


Image Caption



## 05 Bibliography



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Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

AHP architects (2015): UNIVERSITY OF LONDON SENATE HOUSE Listed Building Management Guidelines

Baty. P (2016) : A Report on the Decorative Schemes following an Examination of the Malet Street Railings

BDP (2006): Listed Building Application, Senate House Phase 2 and 3

Image Caption



## 06 Appendices

## 06.1 LISTING DESCRIPTION

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### SENATEHOUSEAND INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON) AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

#### 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: SENATE HOUSE AND INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON) AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

List entry Number: 1113107

#### Location

SENATE HOUSE AND INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON) AND ATTACHED RAILINGS,  
MALET STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority. County: Greater London  
Authority  
District: Camden

District Type: London Borough

#### Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry. Grade: II\*

Date first listed: 28-Mar-1969

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

#### Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system. Legacy System: LBS  
UID: 477485

#### 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

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

##### Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## 06.1 LISTING DESCRIPTION

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### History

LegacyRecord - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Details

TQ2981NE 798-1/99/1101

CAMDEN MALET STREET (East side) Senate House and Institute of Education (University of London) and attached railings 28/03/69 GV II\* Senate House and Institute of Education. 1932-1938. By Charles Holden, built with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Brick load-bearing construction with Portland stone facing

Symmetrical design, not completed, comprising central tower flanked by two courtyard ranges to either side. The southern, completed half, houses the ceremonial and administrative functions of the University of London. The northern half houses the Institute of Historical Research and School of Slavonic Studies in more functional surrounding: north-east wing not completed. The initial concept of a single, spinal building extending the length of Torrington Square was abandoned as building began, but survives in model form displayed on the first floor balcony of Senate House.

EXTERIOR: central, higher fourth floor is the University library, with above it offices and bookstack housed in the formal 18-storey tower built in recessed stages with broad central buttresses on the east and west sides. Six windows at first floor level. Four and five storey wings with ten-window forward return and 14 windows width each. Under enriched, flat canopies, two square-headed entrances each side of the central buttress, all with two-leaf glass doors with vertically patterned metal grills. Above the canopies small rectangular windows with patterned grills and keystones. Square-headed, recessed windows with metal frames, those at first floor level on the tower being elongated with enriched spandrel panels and flanked by medium sized windows at the angles, with balconies, culminating in lunettes at sixth floor level. From the second floor to the 18th, small vertically set windows, in groups of three until the penultimate stage when they are continuous. Flanking wings with metal balconies to windows at angles. Flat roofs with plain bands at parapet levels. East facade similar. Inner courtyards similarly treated, with hopper heads dated 1936.

INTERIOR: imposing Egyptianate entrance hall at base of tower with

travertine floor and walls with broad fluted pilasters a semi-open space giving through access, with doors to south leading to Senate House and to north to Institute of Historical Research and School of Slavonic Studies.

Senate House. Principal spaces all with travertine cladding to walls and floors, ceilings of moulded plaster with flat panel patterns and embellishments based on a London plane tree motif. Staircases floored in travertine, with bronzed balustrades treated as stylised Ionic columns. Principal entrance hall on two levels with first floor balcony having elaborate bronzed balustrade: Holden's original model exhibited here.

On ground floor there is to east the MacMillan Hall, named after Lord

MacMillan first Chairman of the University Court, with square panelled ceiling, travertine walls decorated as fluted pilasters at end and to sides set with acoustic panels to Holden's design and coloured glass, teak floor, and original light fittings. Memorials to HRH Queen Mother, Chancellor 1955-80, and to Princess Royal, Chancellor 1981-. William Beveridge Hall, named after the University's Vice Chancellor 1926-8, retains dado panelling set with brass filets in Greek key pattern under acoustic quilting, with semi-permanent seating and stage.



## 06.1 LISTING DESCRIPTION

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On first floor processional stair leads to Chancellor's Hall, with square panelled timber to window recesses, travertine cladding, and square panelled plaster ceilings. Inlay pattern floors, original doors and fittings. To east a suite of rooms set round courtyard includes Court Room and Senate Room. Senate Room and ante rooms fully panelled in English walnut, the former of double height with trabeated ceilings, original fixed seating in stepped rows arranged like a council chamber with dias. Bronze uplighters. Ante rooms with heraldic glass by E Bossanyi dated 1937. On north side committee room and processional suite of corridors with dado panelling and moulded cornices, original furnishings and fittings. On south side the Vice Chancellor's offices not inspected.

Second floor staff common rooms and third floor common rooms and refectories originally with painted mural ceilings. Those in refectory not seen under later acoustic tiles; war memorial tablet in corridor. Fourth floor libraries of double height. Two general reading rooms, the Middlesex Libraries, finished in oak with original bookshelves and fittings of English walnut. Goldsmith's Library to south with glazed bookcases, and ceiling of cypress wood and stained glass by E Bossanyi. Above these the bookstacks supported by steel frame on concrete raft. The offices retain original doors, lettering and fittings. The whole is a remarkably unaltered ensemble of 1930s design, with a high proportion of highly decorated ceremonial spaces over functional offices.

The Institute of Historical Research and School of Slavonic Studies with ground-floor entrance hall of single-storey height, travertine floors and finishings similar in style but simpler than those found in Senate House.

**SUBSIDIARY FEATURES:** attached cast-iron railings on stone sleeper wall and gates of radial pattern with central bosses containing coats of arms. Pillars with pilasters and geometric enrichment, those at the gates surmounted by rectangular down-lighter lamps with small defused panes and topped by stepped features.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** built as a landmark, in 1937 this was the tallest building in

London apart from St Paul's Cathedral. Listing NGR:

TQ2992381896


Selected Sources

Books and journals

The Senate House and Library, (1938)

Websites

War Memorials Register, accessed 17 August 2017 from

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/11081> 

National Grid Reference: TQ 29923 81896





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