



Donald Insall Associates  
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Bloomsbury Hotel, London, WC1B 3NN

Design and Access Statement

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## **Contact information**

Aimée Felton  
aimee.felton@insall-architects.co.uk  
Tel: 020 7245 9888

## **London Office**

12 Devonshire Street  
London, W1G 7AB

[www.insall-architects.co.uk](http://www.insall-architects.co.uk)



## 1. Introduction



The Bloomsbury Club Bar

### 1.1 Purpose of this Design and Access Statement

The following Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the Planning and Listed Building Consent Application for The Bloomsbury Hotel, located at 16-22 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3NN.

The aim of the project is to enhance the existing offer and facilities that the hotel provides to the Bloomsbury area and to hotel guests within its eating and dining facilities.

### 1.2 The Proposed Works

The application relates to discrete packages of localised intervention to the historic fabric within the hotel.

The proposals include;

- A new external garden area with tables, chairs, benches and independent shading and heating as part of the recently opened Coral Room. The area is enclosed by movable planters and the existing trees as a screen.
- A new porters lodge at the top of the passageway for staff to manage the flow of arriving vehicles and directing visitors to their destination.

The Coral Garden , Porters Lodge and associated landscaping greatly enliven the north west corner of the building, serving as a deterrent to anti social behavior (on the passageway between Great Russell St and Bainbridge St ) and creating a greater sense of security for both local residents and hotel guests.

### 1.3 The Team

The proposed works as part of this report and planning consent submission form a joint effort from a multidisciplinary team as follows:

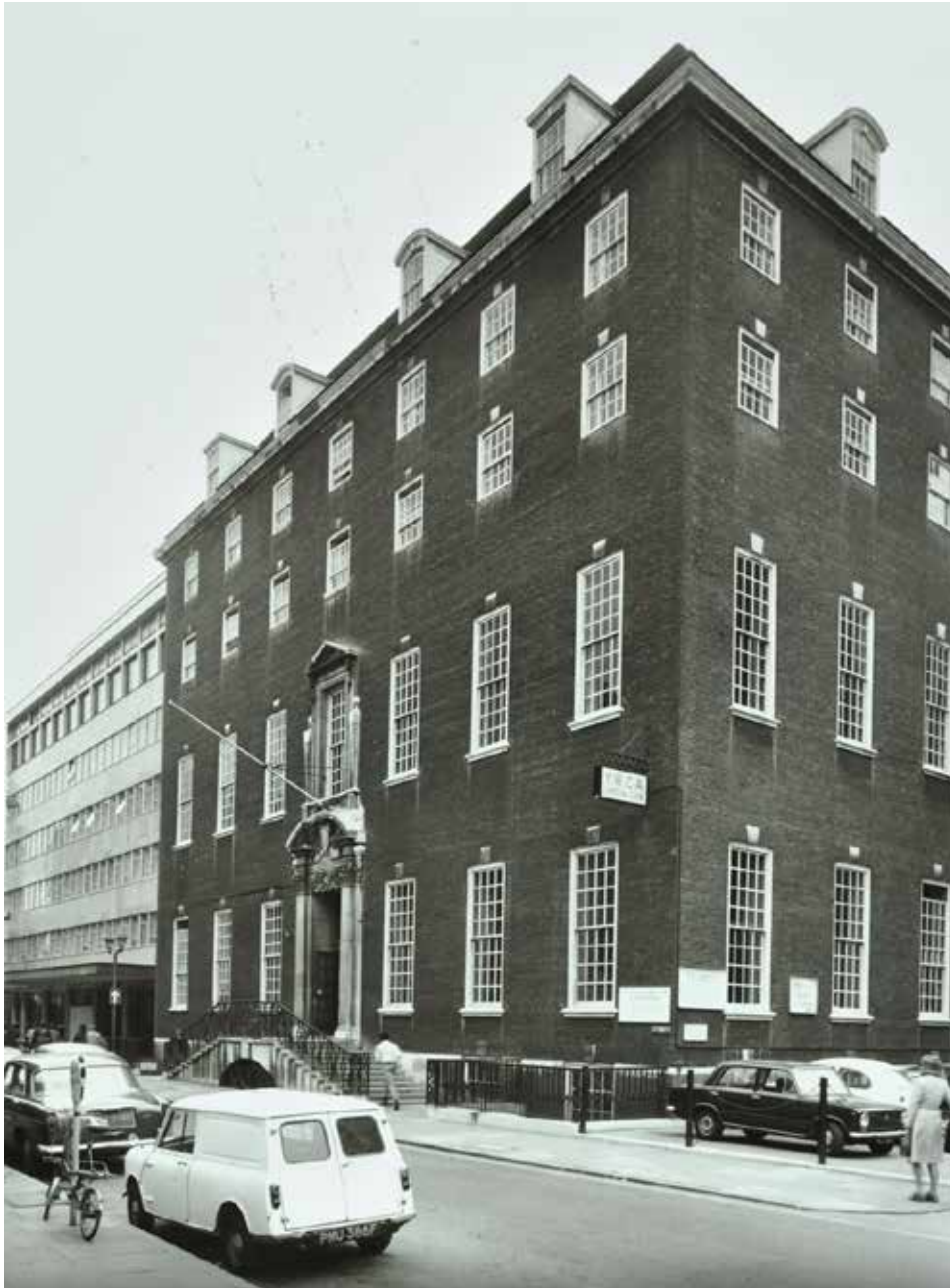
Client: The Doyle Collection

Architect: Donald Insall Associates

Historic Building Consultants: Donald Insall Associates

Planning: DP9

Awning Design: Deans Blinds and Awning UK Ltd



## 2. Context

### 2.1 Physical Context

The Bloomsbury Hotel is statutorily listed at Grade II. The site is bounded by Great Russell Street to the north and Bainsbridge Street to the south.

The western entrance of the street is dominated by the 1970s TUC concrete building with towers on the northern side. Moving eastwards, the scale of the buildings decreases and those surrounding the study site to the north and west are generally three or four storeys in height, with stucco or brick facades, some with mansard roofs.

To the west of the building a narrow, hard-landscaped thoroughfare; runs perpendicular to Great Russell Street meeting with Bainbridge Street, a secondary thoroughfare, to the rear of the building. This is a narrow road and currently traffic cannot pass through.

On the western side of the road is the Dominion Theatre with a large, brick wall with small casement windows to its upper section, thereby leaving a large area of plain brickwork below.

The passageway has been re-landscaped to introduce new paving in a Lutyens style, a new entrance canopy and improved visitor signage and wayfinding.

### 2.2 Visual Context

Externally, The Bloomsbury Hotel is in good condition and is subject to frequent maintenance, repair and renewal.

The terraces to the west elevation, installed in 2014-2015 are now fully planted with a variety of trees, planters and flowers.



### 3. Architectural and Historic Significance

The Bloomsbury Hotel was originally built as a club for the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) and was constructed between 1929 and 1932.

The building has architectural and historic significance as it represents a time in the history of the YWCA when membership was growing and changing. From 1918-1925 members had mainly been drawn from industrial and domestic workers but by the 1930s there was a large and growing element from business and the professions, in addition to a number of leisured women. The YWCA responded to these changes by providing a Club with facilities that accommodated the demands and interests of these new member types. The building also has architectural importance in its own right as it has been designed by the seminal 20<sup>th</sup> century architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869- 1944).

The front (north) and side (west) elevations are of high significance, as they are sophisticated designs in a symmetrical Neo-Georgian style, constructed of high-quality materials and displaying high standards of craftsmanship.

Of lesser significance, but still of importance, is the rear elevation, which is less decorative than the other two façades and is viewed only from Bainbridge Street, a secondary thoroughfare. On its east elevation the building abuts its neighbour. The railings surrounding the lightwells to the west of the building are modern and are of no significance.

The archway with its associated railings, which ornaments the steps leading up the west entrance, is a modern replica of the original. Its modern fabric is of no significance but its design is of some significance as it is a replica of Lutyens's original design.





## 4. Access

### 4.1 Pedestrian Access

As part of these proposals the strategy for pedestrian access will not change. All hotel guests will still proceed along the passageway to the west door.

Patrons to the Coral Room Bar, will enter via Great Russell Street.

### 4.2 Vehicular Access

Vehicular access for the hotel will filter from Great Russell Street down the passageway to Bainbridge Street.

The porter will manage vehicular traffic from the porters lodge and the drop off point for hotel guests beneath the canopy.

The existing vehicular access, including refuse or emergency vehicles to surrounding properties will not be impacted by this proposal.

### 4.3 Inclusive Access

There are no proposals within this application to alter the existing inclusive access provision within the Hotel.

Lift access from pavement level will still be available from inside the hotel on the west elevation.







## 5. Coral Room Garden

- The new seating, screening and tables to the right hand side of the Bloomsbury Hotel at the junction between the passageway and Great Russell Street offers patrons of the Coral Room with an external seating area.
- The area is non-smoking and screened from traffic and passing by pedestrians by low level movable planters and hedges.
- The benches are Lutyens inspired and the bistro tables (nine in total) and chairs (24 total) are metal, painted a deep blue colour. All of the furniture is moveable and non-fixed to the building or floor finish.
- Benches and the bistro tables are decorated with lanterns and small vases, in the style the hotel use throughout the building and restaurant facilities.
- Lighting is via individual candles in lanterns on tables and there is no other external lighting to the area.
- The hours of use for the area are; 8am to 11pm
- Only patrons of the Coral Room and the Bloomsbury Hotel are permitted to use the area.



All images by The Bloomsbury Hotel





Side (West) Elevation 1971



Side (West) Elevation 2018