

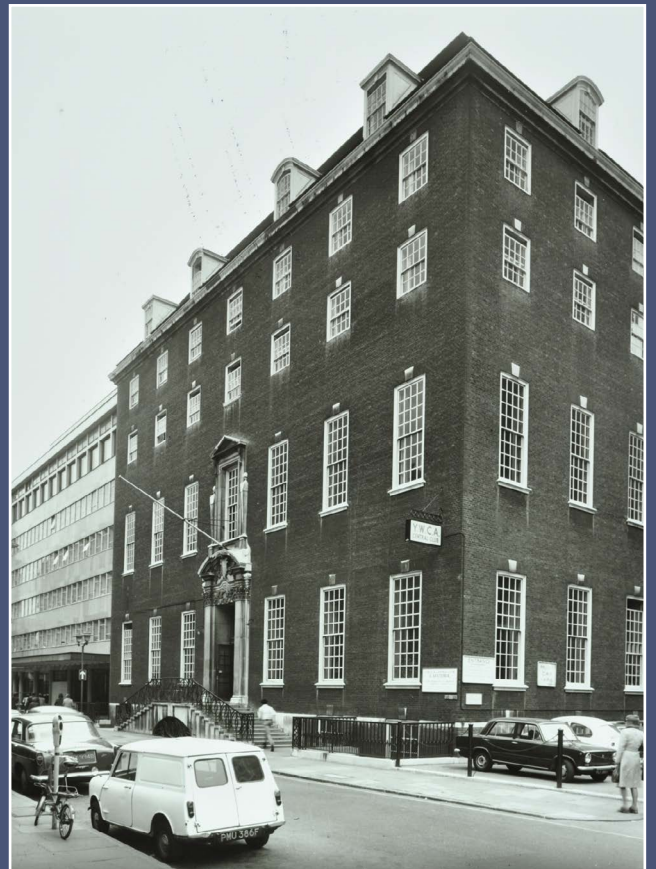
Donald Insall Associates

The Bloomsbury Hotel, 16-22 Great Russell Street

Addendum to Historic Building Report of August 2018

For The Doyle Collection

April 2019



Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Bloomsbury Hotel, 16-22 Great Russell Street

Historic Building Report

For The Doyle Collection



Ordnance Survey map with the site marked in red.

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1.0 Introduction and Summary of Proposals

This short statement was commissioned by The Doyle Collection in April 2019 to address the heritage considerations relating to the proposed addition of a Porter's Hut outside the Bloomsbury Hotel.

The proposals would be carried out in addition to the approved works that form part of listed building consent application 2018/4460/L and planning application 2018/4012/P. This report forms an addendum to, and should be read in conjunction with, the Donald Insall Associates Historic Building Report of August 2018 that was submitted with the external works application.

As set out in the aforementioned Insall report, the significance of the Bloomsbury Hotel can be summarised as follows:

The Bloomsbury Hotel was originally built as a club for the Young Women's Christian Association. It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens 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 20th 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.

The proposal comprises the following:

- Addition of an exterior timber Porter's Hut to the northwest corner of the Bloomsbury Hotel. The proposed hut would be freestanding, adjacent to the exterior seating area. It would not connect with the existing building.

2.0 Implications of the Proposals and Justification

The proposed Porter's Hut would be positioned at the north end of the pedestrianised road that extends along the west elevation of the Bloomsbury Hotel, and would be in alignment with the north elevation of the Bloomsbury Hotel. The structure is to be an octagonal shape, timber framed, and clad in ship-lap timber boards stained black with a felt roof covering. It has been designed in the Lutyens aesthetic and would therefore complement the listed building, and its setting in the streetscape.

The proposed work seeks to further improve the environment of the hotel and its setting. The phased approach of the masterplan for the site is delivering good custodianship of the historic fabric and public realm, whilst ensuring long-term sustainable use and revenue. The hut would be of modest proportions, and would provide shelter and warmth from inclement weather to the staff members who monitor the passageway and manage the flow of traffic to the entrance of the hotel. They also monitor antisocial behaviour, thus ensuring the exterior space is safe and inviting to the public and guests.

In accordance with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, the setting and special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II-listed building and the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area would be preserved by the proposed addition, as the position, design and materiality of the hut complements the character of the existing listed building and streetscape. As the hut would be of modest scale, it would also not compete with, or detract from, the character of the listed building. As such, the presumption against the grant of planning permission outlined in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 would not be engaged.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) has crystallised previous policy approaches to the historic environment. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and it emphasises the need to take account of the pros and cons of any proposal to alter and adapt buildings of 'special' architectural and historical interest and to ensure that any harm to a designated heritage asset is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, it is considered that the proposals would not result in any harm to the listed building or to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Any perceived harm resulting from the proposals would also be outweighed by the wider public benefits, including the provision of improved security measures and sustaining the building in its optimum viable use. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in historic building terms.

