

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Victoria House, Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4DA

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Introduction:

The aim of this document is to demonstrate the factors which have been considered taking into account the location and Grade II listed status of the building both externally and internally.

Proposed works as follows:

External works: Proposed cleaning and mortar repairs to cracked stone and joints of Portland stone to the cooling towers at roof top level; repairs to mansard roof slates and leadwork; repairs to Portland stone and waterproof coating to box gutters behind parapet walls at 5th floor level. All works are repairs using materials to match the existing colours and finishes.

It should be noted the proposed cleaning method for the Portland stone is a steam clean. This is the preferred method as it uses less water than a lower temperature wash which is important as the result is the stone becomes less saturated. The risk associated with the stone becoming saturated is discolouration due to minerals leaching from the stone and collecting on the surface. Therefore in order to retain the existing aesthetic consistency of the Portland stone, it is recommended the steam cleaning method is used on this occasion.

Internal works: Proposed cleaning, repair and decoration of decorative surfaces within the four staircases serving the building between B2 basement level and 5th floor.

Background: Site location

The application is for Victoria House, Bloomsbury Square, London WC1B 4DA located within the London Borough of Camden. The property, completed in 1932, is a Grade II listed commercial office building with retail units to part of the ground floor. The property is also located with the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The location plan is shown in Appendix A.

Objective:

External works: Roof top water cooling tower housing, mansard roofs and box gutters.

The aim of the proposed external works to the upper floor areas (5th floor and above) and roof are to undertake priority repairs to slates, defective leadwork and gutter coatings to prevent water ingress. To the water cooling tower housing, the cleaning and repairs of Portland stone, including mortar joints are to prevent further deterioration of the ashlar, pilasters, caps, string courses and parapets. The critical windows require repairs to remediate the warping of frames and to redecorate the failed protective coating to the frames.

Internal works: Clean, repair and decoration of the existing surface finishes to the four main staircases serving the building between B2 basement and 5th floor level.

The aim of the proposed internal works is to refresh the decorative surface finishes, which include marble, Portland stone, terrazzo, painted plaster and brasswork within the four main staircases serving the building. The works will be sympathetic to the condition of the existing materials and will be finished to match existing styles and colour.

Tender process for the selection of a suitable contractor:

It is proposed that all works will be undertaken by specialist contractors with specific capability to undertake the repair works to a high quality. Contractors will be requested to provide case studies of similar works as part of the tendering process.

Access:

- External works:
 - The contractor proposes to utilise several methods of access for the external works, summarised as follows:
 - Roof-top cooling towers – tower scaffold tied to the main structure;
 - Mansard roof leadwork: hanging scaffold supported from the main roof area;
 - Mansard roof slates and gutter work – via specialist abseil team.
- Internal works:
 - Use of the staircases, and additionally, a scaffold tower situated within the open well of the staircase.

Conclusion:

External works:

The proposed external works to the mansard roof area are considered a priority to ensure the building is water tight and materials located at high level are secure to prevent a potential fall on to the street. The repairs to these areas will be undertaken using traditional methods and will match the existing appearance.

The proposed cleaning and repairs to the cooling tower housing are considered a priority to prevent further deterioration of the stone work, mortar joints and window frames. The repairs to these areas will be undertaken using traditional methods and will match the existing appearance.

Internal works:

The internal works are required to undertake repairs and restore the existing materials to prevent further deterioration due to heavy use by building occupants. Also to maintain the materials to an acceptable standard in line with their listed status.

Appendix A

Site location plan