

**THE BRITISH MUSEUM
ROOF OVER GREEK AND ROMAN STUDY ROOM**

PROPOSED ACCESS HATCH

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LISTED
BUILDING APPLICATION**



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DESIGN STATEMENT

The need and outline of the proposal

The Museum has a continuing programme of major upgrading of the electrical services infrastructure which includes the Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting (FAEL) installation.

These works are essential for the British Museum to comply with their legal obligations and to ensure protection of life, objects and artefacts and the fabric and structure of this important Grade I Listed Building.

Much of the electrical infrastructure is concealed within voids to prevent unnecessary disruption and diminution of the important aesthetic of the building both internally and externally. To this end, roof voids are employed to distribute services and in this instance the void over the Greek and Roman Study Room is to be utilised with the necessary provision of an access hatch to the copper clad roof.

The location and details of the hatch are shown on drawings S&MP-R SK006 and S&MP-R SK007 produced by others and forming part of the Listed Building application package.

The access hatch is a proprietary product by Bilko with a nominal size of 915 x 915mm (external 1195 x 1195) and comprising a single leaf hatch door. These hatches have been used for many years throughout the Museum roofscape and have been included in numerous previous Listed Building applications by both the Museum and their Consultants in the past, so a precedent exists for the use of these units.

The proposal is to form a new opening for the hatch through the existing roof decking. Trimming of any joists / rafters will be avoided if possible and the copper finish will be adapted to form necessary ridges and valleys immediately behind the hatch to ensure that rainwater is adequately shed around the hatch.

Existing finishes and fabric.

The existing fabric affected by the installation of the hatch will be limited to the roof decking and the (later) copper finish.

The decking is assumed to be hardwood, probably mahogany or similar and laid diagonally as found elsewhere in the major roof areas,

The copper has been replaced in the not too distant past, as it has yet to have the cuprous patina associated with aging. The main South range of the Museum is the only recorded areas of original copper referred to by Smirke. This area is part of the West Wing and although copper finish has been retained over the years the trapezoidal rolls indicates replacement originally dating around the 1950's. The original copper roof finish would have had standing seam joints; the introduction and availability of thinner copper in the 1950's allowed for tighter welted joints and the ability to form upstands and cappings in the material over raised trapezoidal timber rolls. The finish therefore follows the original design intent by Smirke but varies in detail as the technology changed in the early to mid-20th century. The historical significance is the material rather than the detail, but in neither case is the existing finish original.

The Museums Conservation Plan refers to the Greek and Roman Offices being of historical significance and the roof itself remaining generally unaltered; the replacement rooflight being positioned in the same juxtaposition as the original.

Conclusion relative to design

The introduction of the new roof hatch has little effect on the architectural and historic significance of the roof finishes and fabric other than minor intrusion in forming the opening.

The positive benefits of the provision of the hatch are to allow access for installation and maintenance of major safety infrastructure which protects lives, objects and historic fabric.

ACCESS STATEMENT

None of the proposed works has any impact on physical access for disabled people. However, the improvement of the detection, alarm and emergency lighting systems benefits both able bodied and disabled visitors and staff at the British Museum.