

Design and Access Statement

NYX London Holborn Hotel alterations to lift motor room and roof terrace

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on the instructions of the applicant in support of a planning application for alterations to the roof terrace at the above property in the London Borough of Camden. It should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and other documents.

Introduction

The application is for full planning permission for an upward extension of the lift motor room and the erection of a lightweight bioclimatic pergola on the roof terrace of an existing hotel. The two additions are directly connected in that the purpose of the lift extension is to improve access to the improved and upgraded roof terrace.

Description of the existing property

The NYX Hotel London Holborn is a successful luxury hotel serving the London business and tourist market and has been operating from the present building for many years. It is located at the busy junction of Theobald's Road and Southampton Row outwith but adjacent to both the Bloomsbury and Kingsway Conservation Areas. The building contains hotel reception and restaurants on the ground floor, guest bedroom accommodation on the upper floors and a pool and spa below ground. It has a modern appearance of a mid-twentieth century character, with white coloured metal fenestration, spandrel panels and rain-screen elements as well as areas of original brickwork and Portland stone walling. Originally constructed as offices in the 1960s, the structure was converted and extended for hotel use in the 1990s, at which time a substantial part of the façade was upgraded with new windows and metal cladding to newly constructed additions.



View of the existing building from South-West



View of the existing building from South-East

Proposed development

The proposed development consists of the extension of the existing lift motor and plant room at level 10 (roof) and the installation of a bioclimatic pergola above the existing roof terrace. This pergola will allow the operator to extend the roof terrace season, as it offers year-round protection and shelter.

Use

The NYX Holborn Hotel occupies a large prominent building at the junction of Southampton Row and Theobald's Road in the south of the Borough. Although originally constructed as an office building (Sentinel House) it was converted into a hotel about 25 years ago at which point it became the Grange Holborn Hotel. The building was briefly a Jury's Inn but has recently been re-branded the NYX Holborn Hotel by the current operator.

The entirety of the building, except for a bank at ground floor level, is in hotel use following planning permission reference P/96/01687 R2 granted on 10/03/1997. The existing (10th floor) roof has been used as an amenity terrace for more than twenty years. During the last ten years the south side of the roof has featured a canopy sky bar structure providing additional amenity for patrons using the terrace. This structure has recently been removed to facilitate roof repairs and is now to be replaced.

The application proposal is to re-provide a sheltering canopy, more correctly referred to as a bioclimatic pergola, over the amenity terrace, for the benefit of guests and patrons. To facilitate access to this, one of the existing three main passenger lifts will be extended to serve the roof terrace (Level 10). The use of the roof terrace, including all the floor area within the canopy, will remain C1 (hotel) use, with all activities taking place here being ancillary to the primary use of the host building.



View of west facing side of roof motor room



View of south wall of motor room looking east

Amount

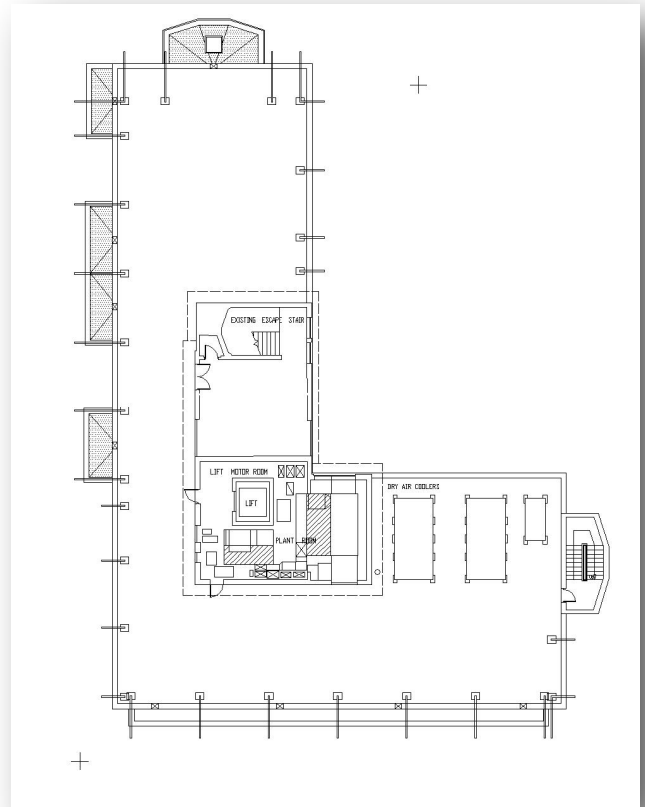
The proposed canopy structure has an area (GIA) of approximately 231m², and will cover about 47% of the roof terrace, which is about 489m². It is slightly larger than the previous canopy, which measured about 145m² and covered approximately 30% of the roof area.

Layout

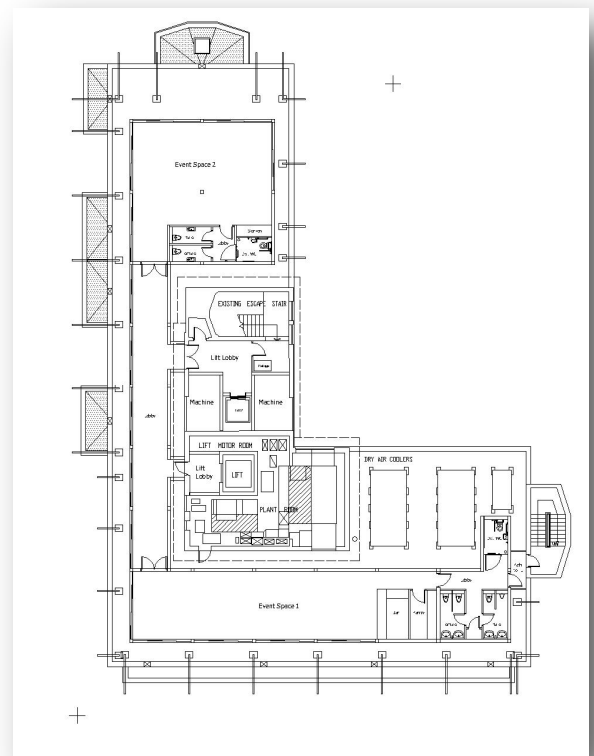
The pergola consists of vertical metal posts at regular centres connected by lateral metal beams at uniform height. Its roof comprises flat panels in fabric or moveable metal louvres that can be rotated to control insolation or retracted completely. Between the perimeter supporting posts, infill panels comprising clear glass sheets or solid insulating material, form the walls. These can also be retracted and thus 'de-materialised' for a complete outdoor environment within the pergola frame.

In the proposal the pergola structure is independent from the existing built superstructure at this level, being linked to it only where doors from the lifts open to the roof. The layout of the pergola follows the overall roof geometry and is characterised by two principle volumes, to the south and north respectively, connected by a linear passage linking the accommodation access doors. This layout provides for flexibility in use, in that different groups of guests and visitors can be channelled into separate event spaces in parallel.

The pergola includes two separate sanitary blocks and two bars/serveries, catering respectively for the two main customer spaces. Disabled toilet provision is made for each part of the pergola, as can be seen in the layout drawing, to ensure the self-containment of each part.



Plan of level 10 (roof) - existing

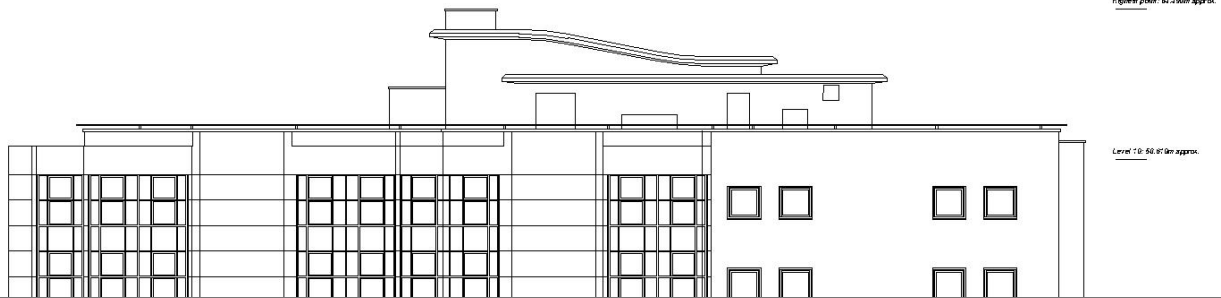


Plan of level 10 (roof) - proposed

Scale

The pergola is a minor addition to the building's physical scale and the former's lightweight character will reduce any visual impact it may have. The pergola frame height is approximately 3000mm above the roof terrace surface. The edges of the pergola frame are set back considerably from the roof edge parapet on all sides. The result is that the pergola is invisible from the public realm in immediate proximity to the building. Where it can be seen from the street (i.e. from farther away), the combination of distance and perspective effects reduces the apparent scale. The horizontal emphasis of the pergola frame's members at the perimeter also tend to suppress the vertical scale in terms of visual perception.

The upward extension of the lift structure, resulting from the need to take the lift car up to level 10, has been configured to minimise apparent bulk by positioning it over the middle of three shafts. Thus it sits centrally over the existing roof access housing and does not interfere with its rather attractive wave-like roof form. It has been kept no higher than the existing roof vent shaft so that the overall and maximum height of the building is unaffected by the proposal.



Elevation of upper part of building facing west—existing



Elevation of upper part of building facing west—proposed

Landscaping

There is no substantial 'landscaping' element in the proposal, due to the site being an existing roof terrace. However the applicant will be making extensive use of pot-based planters around the roof perimeter when completing the works. These will 'green' the roof edge and facilitate the 'blending in' of the pergola structure with the building and its wider setting.

Appearance

The pergola is fabricated from steel sections clad with crisply detailed aluminium pressings. These latter elements will be powder coated in a durable polymer finish to complement the building's existing facing materials. With wall and roof panels retracted, the pergola closely resembles a traditional architectural feature used in gardens for structure and spatial definition. With the panels deployed it takes on the character of a glass pavilion sitting within a landscape. In both cases the appearance enhances that of the host building by providing visual interest at roof level.

Access

Convenient access to the improved roof-top facilities for all visitors will be delivered by the new lift service to level 10. This is a quantum leap in terms of access to the amenity terrace, as this level was previously accessible only via the stairs from the floor below, where the lift service terminated. This project when implemented will effectively deliver step-free access from street to roof terrace for all customers.



View of typical bioclimatic pergola showing retractable louvered roof and retractable glazed wall panels



View of typical bioclimatic pergola showing retractable louvered roof and retractable glazed wall panels

End of statement

24th November 2020