

Install Communications Cabling

Design, Heritage & Access Statement

The proposal involves bringing communications cabling into the basement of the building. The works are required to connect the Server of the occupier (Nuffield Health) to the fibre network below the public highway on Mecklenburgh Place.

The Nuffield Health fitness & wellbeing gym is within London House, a Grade II listed building, located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. London House takes the shape of a quadrangle, main entrance off Guilford Street. The Gym is accessed via an enclosed stairwell, down from street level to the Lower Ground.

Cabling will be run, below ground, from an existing chamber in the footpath to the wall of the Lower Ground Floor. This leaves the façade, stonework and railings unaffected. A hole will be drilled in the wall to bring cabling into what is a small Storage/Communications Room. The hole does not exceed 9cm in diameter at will be above head height, concealed in the ceiling.

The cabling will run at ceiling height, following existing cabling, to the existing Server Cabinet within the Room. This, and the Lower Ground Floor generally, has been significantly altered, most probably as part of the works to accommodate a the Gym.

The installation has been carefully sited so as to utilise existing trunking and have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of both the listed building and conservation area.

London House is described as a Halls of Residence for British Empire & Dominions' post-graduate students, designed by Sir Herbert Baker (1930s) in a neo-Georgian style. Notable features of Mecklenburgh Place elevation/wings include: stone cloisters and hall facing inward; and dining hall, Churchill Room, and small Chapel, all with oak panelling. None of these are affected by the proposed works. There is no mention in of the Lower Ground Floor, in the official listing description.

The Conservation Area is broken down into various sub-areas, in terms of character appraisal. In Sub Area 12: Coram's Fields/Brunswick Centre, London House is recognised as an example of "20th Century Buildings" that "vary in age and style". This is in contrast to Mecklenburgh Square, specifically mentioned as having a "fine example" of a homogenous Georgian terrace of townhouses, on its east side. The Townscape Appraisal Map shows London House as a listed building beside a collection of "negative buildings", Nos 13 to 45 Guilford Street. The west elevation of London House is not visible from the Square.

The Storage/Communications Room is accessible from within the building, itself reached via enclosed stairs from the public footpath. There is no reason why any member of the public would need access to these works.

Euan FS Pearson FRGS MRTPI MRICS

Pearson Planning, Chartered Surveyors

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