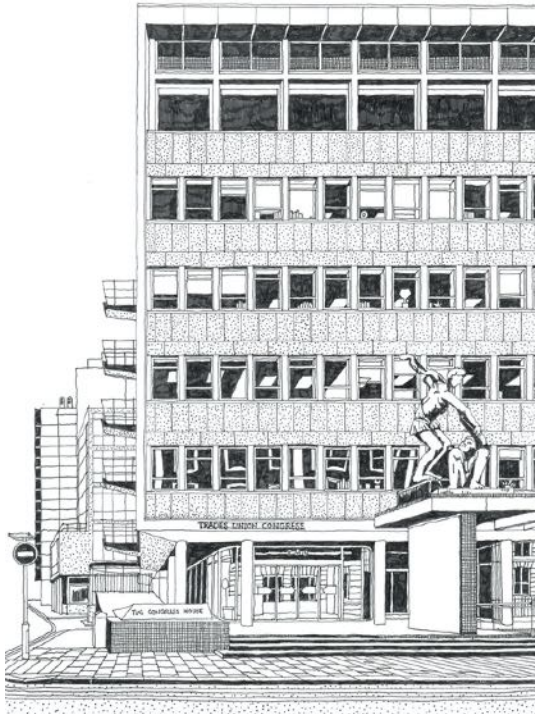




Changing the world
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Congress House
23-28 Great Russell Street
LONDON WC1B 3LS



Proposed New Roof Access Stair

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT Incorporating HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Ref : 5905.P013.DAS/2
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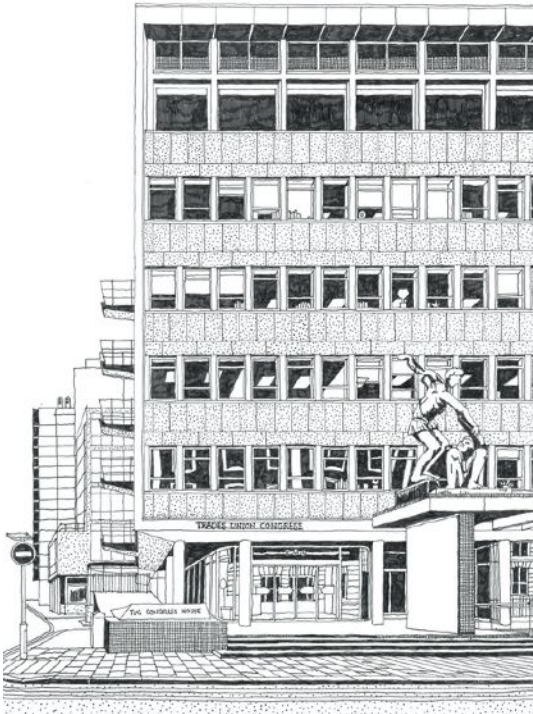
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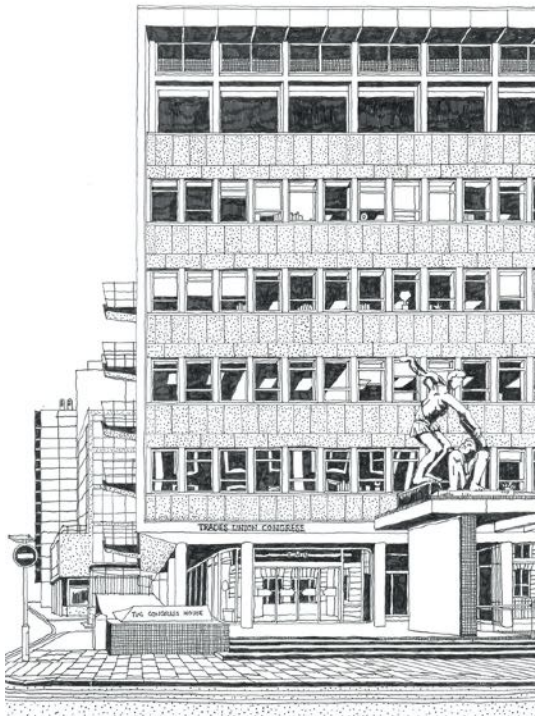
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I.0

Introduction

This report has been prepared by Bartlett Hughes Consulting for the Trades Union Congress and is submitted to the London Borough of Camden in support of the proposals to install a New Roof Access Stairway at Congress House, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS in lieu of an existing but outdated and potentially hazardous fixed ladder



2.0

Heritage Impact Assessment



The works proposed involve only very minor works to limited external areas of the original building (See Section 3.0)
The following is intended to provide background context to the overall significance of the building in respect of its Grade II* listing.

Historical Context

The design of Congress House was the subject of an open architectural competition won by David du R Aberdeen in 1947. The TUC had acquired the site in 1946. The successful proposal not only ingeniously solved the complicated problems presented by the very restricted and awkwardly shaped site, but also created a worthy memorial to Trades Union members who had died during the two World Wars.

Although detailed development of the scheme was initiated immediately after the competition, construction was not begun until early 1953 following the granting of a building licence.

Occupation by the TUC commenced in September 1956 and all the upper floor accommodation was in use by March 1957. The formal opening was on 27th March 1958 although the building was not fully completed until the following June.

Nearly 65 years on the seven storey building stands as a rare example in London of a building still in use by the organisation that originally commissioned it after such a period of time.

Congress House was added to the Department of National Heritage's statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in March 1988 and designated Grade II*.

2.0

Heritage Impact Assessment (cont...)

Architectural Design Significance

Completed ten years after its conception, the design of the building is architecturally something of an anachronism. It pre-dates the expressionism of the Festival of Britain (1951) and has none of the features of the Brutalism being developed at the time by Lasdun and Goldfinger.

Instead, and reflecting du R Aberdeens pre-war training at the Bartlett School of Architecture, it has more in common with the late 1920's public buildings of Le Corbusier, such as the League of Nations (Geneva 1927) and the Centrosoyus (Moscow 1928) and much of the refined detailing is inescapably reminiscent of the Corbusian principles of that period.

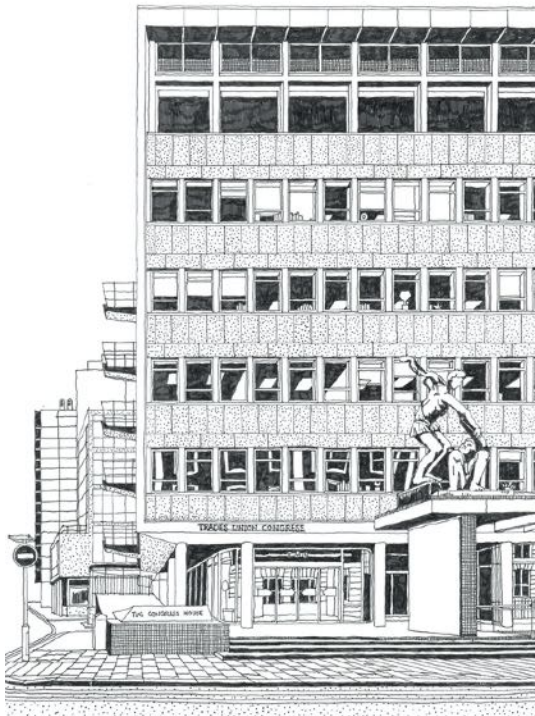
The works covered under this application are exclusively related to roof areas of the building which remain largely unchanged from their original construction and upon which the impact of the proposed works, necessitated by the need for improved accessibility and safety, will be limited.



3.0

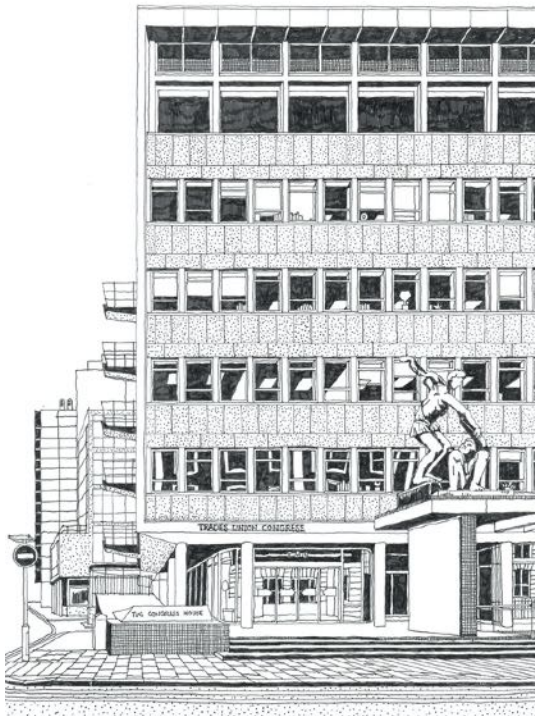
Design Statement

The following section is an explanation and justification of the proposed works forming the basis of this application.



3.1

Existing Access Ladder





Existing Access Ladder

There is an existing and original fixed access service ladder between the 6th floor terrace (5th Floor Roof) and 6th Floor roof level of Congress House, at the rear (Bainbridge Street side) of the building providing maintenance access to the roof of the building.

The ladder is of riveted steel construction with 13no tubular steel treads. There is a circular 3-loop protective guard around the upper section to provide a degree of fall protection.

All paint finished colour: White

The whole is bolted back to the face of the building in 4no locations and has additional support fixings to the 6th Floor roof (Roof level).

It is proving difficult to reconcile the design and state of the ladder with the requirements of modern health and safety and employment equality legislation. It's size and configuration predicates an athleticism and slighthness of build that has resulted in it's use becoming increasingly problematic for the TUC's longer serving maintenance personnel particularly when, as is regularly the case, carrying materials to and from the Rooftop Plant Room. In addition it's location and configuration in relation to the edge of the 6th floor terrace only serves to exacerbate the potential consequences should a fall occur.

Existing Access Ladder



During recent repair works a temporary scaffold was utilised for personnel and material access to the roof from the 6th floor terrace.

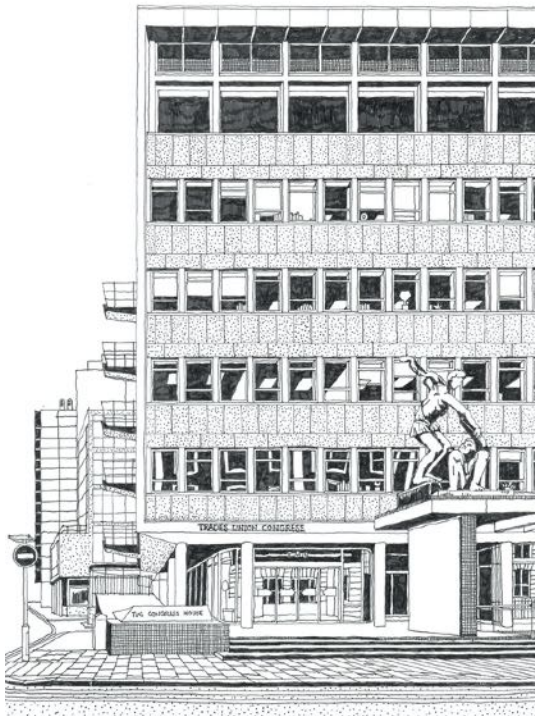
A request for its retention was declined by the London Borough of Camden.

The TUC is therefore investigating a more suitable permanent replacement staircase solution to address the operational concerns outlined above that will also prove to be acceptable in the context of the Grade II* listing of Congress House.

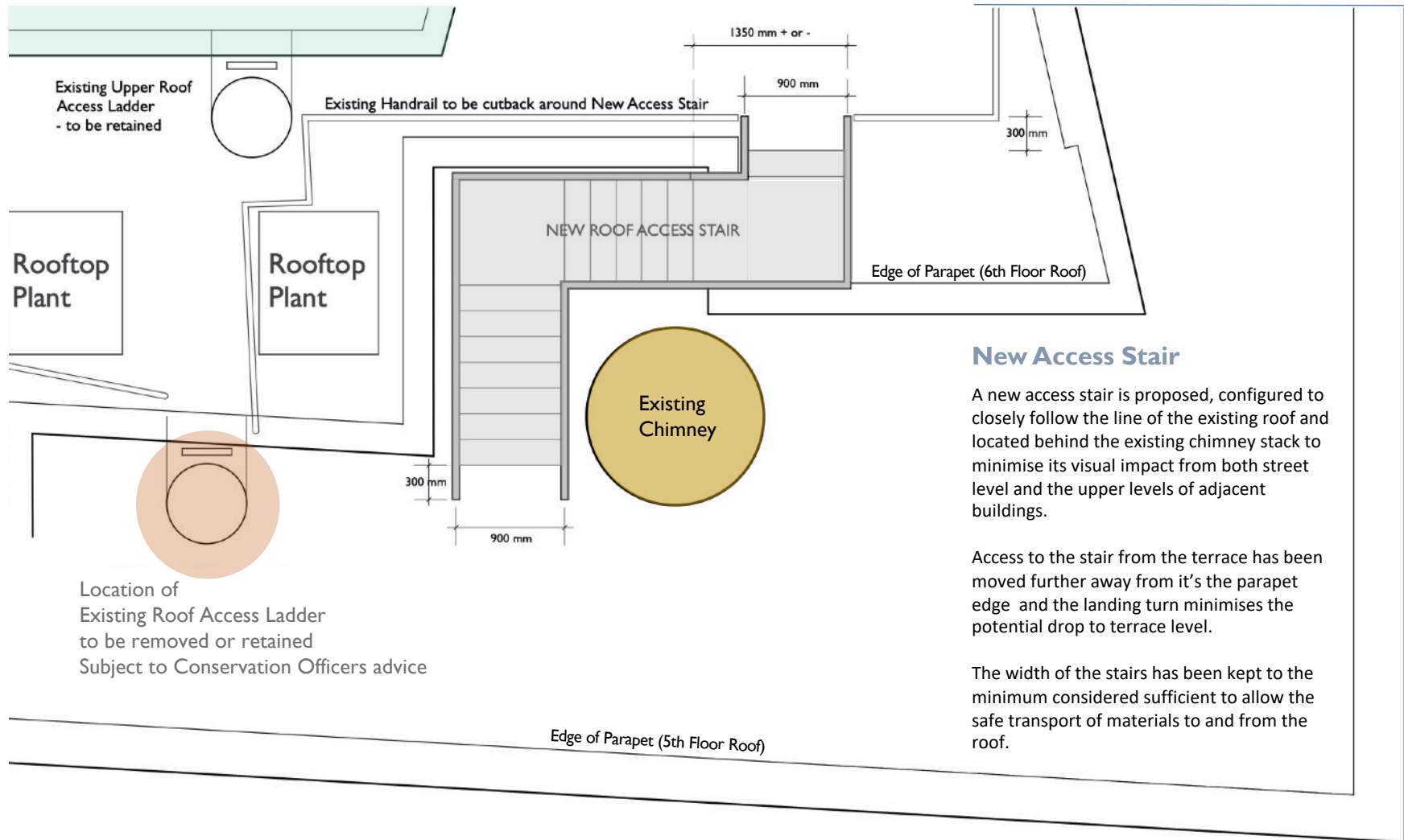


3.2

Proposed New Access Stair



Proposed New Access Stair



New Access Stair

A new access stair is proposed, configured to closely follow the line of the existing roof and located behind the existing chimney stack to minimise its visual impact from both street level and the upper levels of adjacent buildings.

Access to the stair from the terrace has been moved further away from it's the parapet edge and the landing turn minimises the potential drop to terrace level.

The width of the stairs has been kept to the minimum considered sufficient to allow the safe transport of materials to and from the roof.

PLAN – As Proposed

Not to Scale (NTS)



Proposed New Access Stair

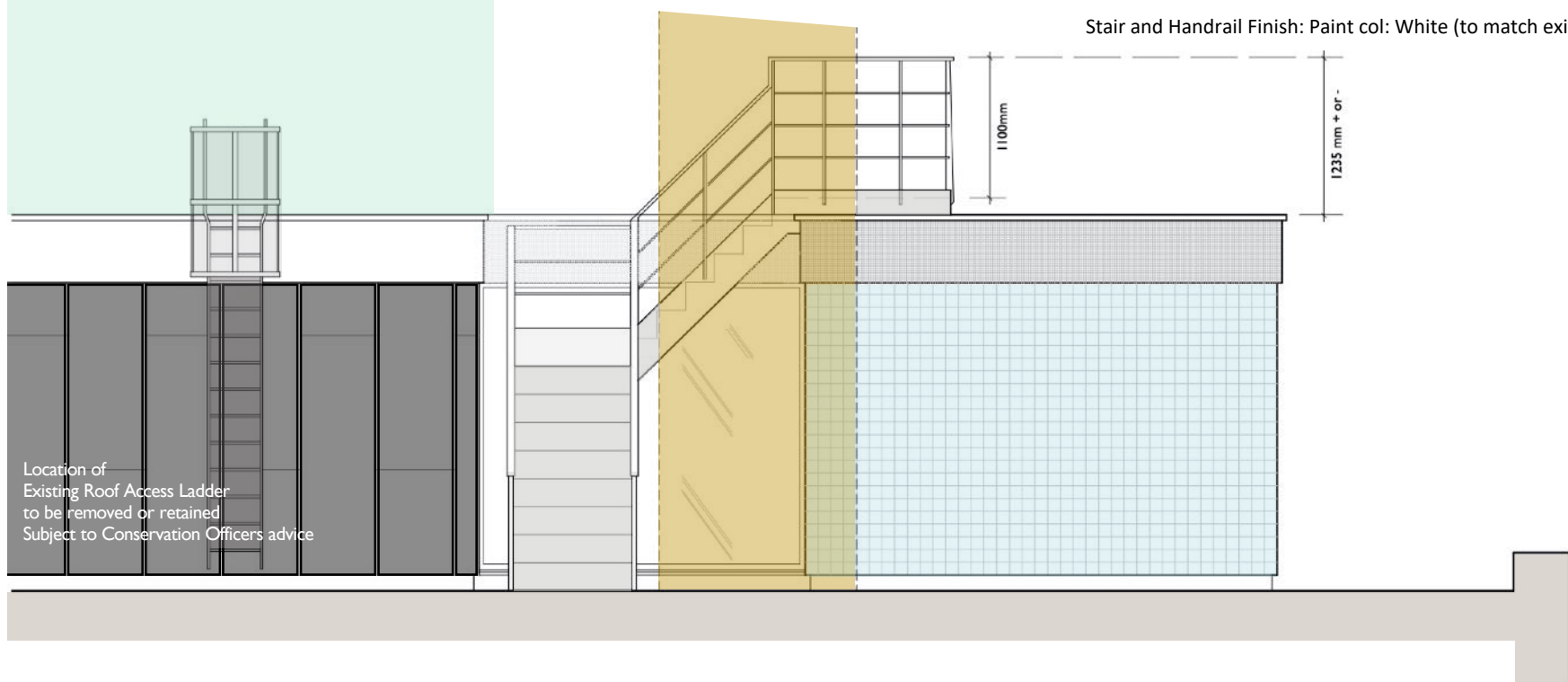
Retention of Existing Access Ladder

Following installation of the Access Stair the Existing Access Ladder will be rendered redundant and could be removed with its associated fixing holes in the building fabric repaired and made good.

Alternatively the ladder could be left in situ and retained as a feature of the original building.

The latter is the TUC's preferred option but they will adopt whichever approach is deemed preferable by Camden's Conservation Officer.

Stair and Handrail Finish: Paint col: White (to match existing ladder).



ELEVATION – As Proposed

Not to Scale (NTS)



Rooftop Landing Point for New Access Stair

Proposed New Access Stair

New Access Stair

The stair will land to the rear of the cantilevered roof section facing onto Dyott Street. (see photo: left)

The floating edge to the roof to the Bainbridge Street Elevation will be unaffected by the new Stair. (see photo: below)



Side Elevation (Bainbridge Street)



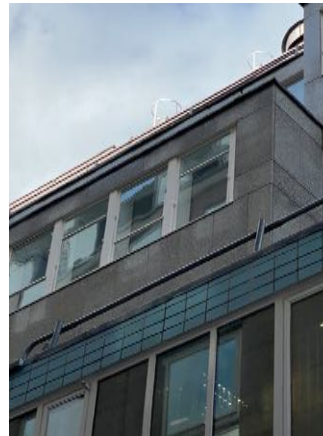
Proposed New Access Stair

Visibility

Both Existing Roof Access Ladders are visible from the far side of the Bainbridge Street / Dyott Street junction.

Closer to the building only the 5th Floor Roof to 6th Floor Roof ladder is visible, together with the top section of the chimney. (see photos)

The Proposed New Access Stair wraps around the rear of the lower section of the chimney and will not be visible from the street. The top landing handrail may be apparent from some angles, but only to the extent of the existing 6th Floor roof safety handrail around all building elevations. (see photo far right)



4.0

Accessibility Statement

The works covered by this application have minimal impact on existing general accessibility provision to, in and around the Congress House.

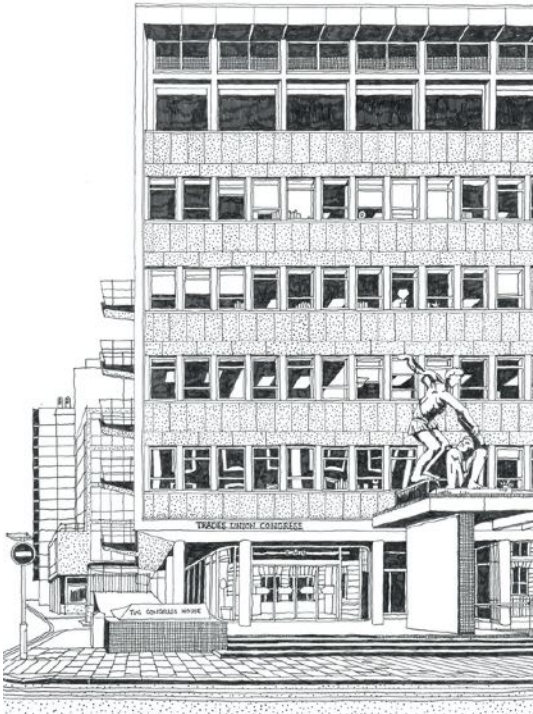
The main reception facing Great Russell Street is equipped with a compliant disabled access ramp currently entered from the adjacent pavement and this is unaffected by the proposed new parking bollards. Internally there are appropriate pass gates adjacent to both sets of security turnstiles to allow full access to the rear part of the building.

Disabled access to the upper floors is maintained through the two lift cores to the North and South end of the building.

The existing fire stairs include disabled refuges with accompanying method statements regarding evacuation in case of fire. The existing fire stairs remain unaffected by the works proposed and access to the office floors will continue to be controlled by emergency fail safe maglock and swipe access card systems as existing. Disabled refuges remain as existing.

Existing fully compliant disabled WC facilities are retained and unaffected in their current locations within the building.

The provision of the New Access Stair will improve universal ambulant accessibility to roof top plant for maintenance engineers of all sizes and fitness levels.



5.0

Appendix - Plans



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