

Triton Court

Planning Application August 2013 - Window Replacement
Supporting Statement



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1.0 Site Location

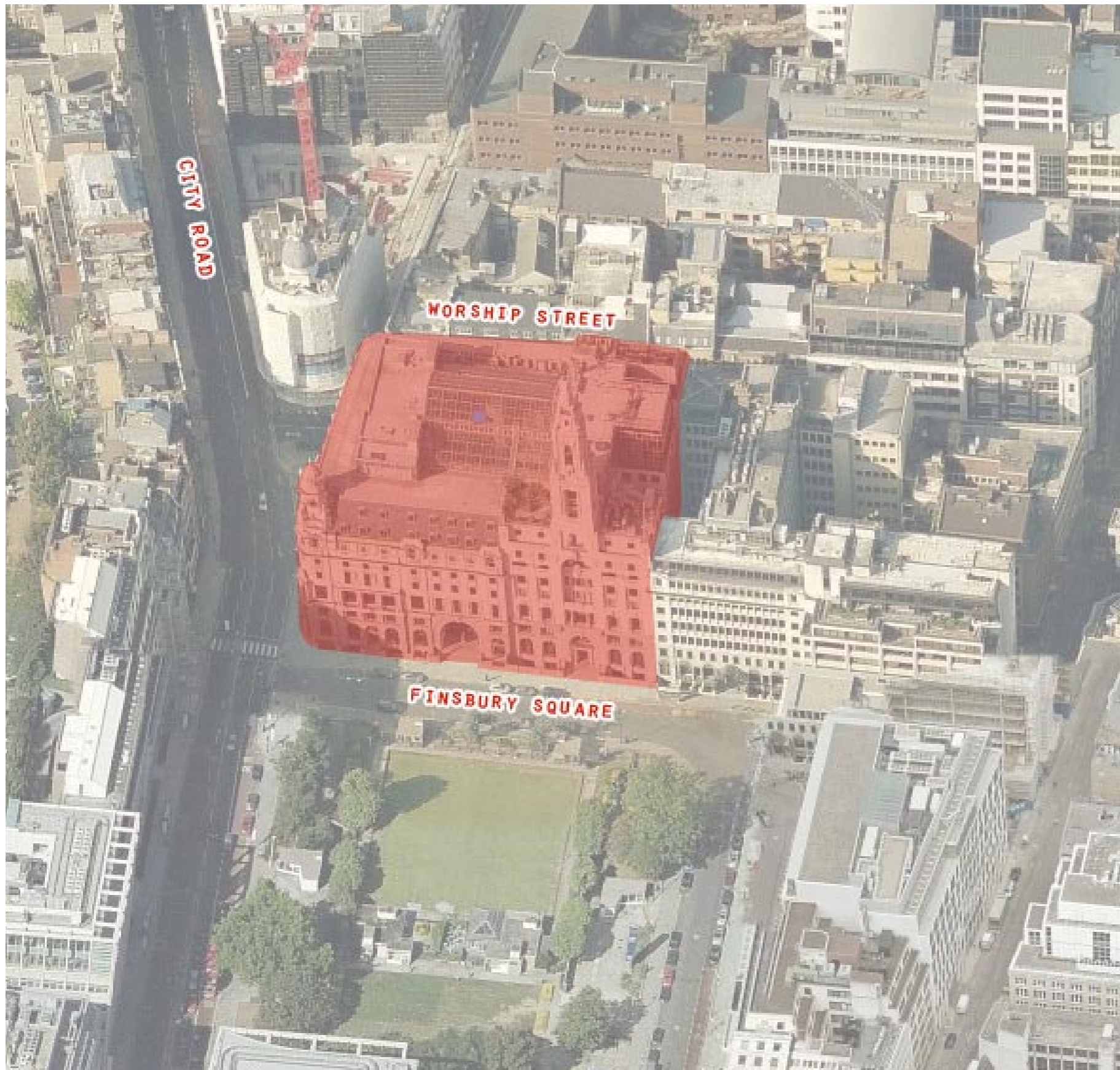


Triton Court
14-18 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1BR

Triton Court sits at the North West corner of Finsbury Square and is bounded by City Road to the West and Worship Street to the North. It lies within the ‘Bunhill Fields/ Finsbury Conservation Area’ (CA 22).



Aerial view of Triton court looking South towards Finsbury Square



EXISTING

Description:

Triton Court is a 20,000sqm steel frame constructed office building originally built during the first three decades of the twentieth century. A major refurbishment and extension combined the buildings to their current form in 1984. Triton Court is composed of three buildings (Mercury, Jupiter and Neptune Houses) arranged around a full height 9 storey atrium with a Lower Ground and Basement.

The atrium roof is a combination of glazing and steelwork. The remainder of the building has an asphalt roof surface to flat areas and slate tiles to the mansard. The roof top plant rooms are contained by reflective glass cladding.

The building has a Portland stone faced corbeled façade, with areas at low levels clad in granite. The building is richly decorated with carving and statues depicting ancient gods. Two bronze statues of Triton frame the main entrance way and the highest spire is topped with a bronze statue of Mercury standing on a globe.

Triton Court was a multi-tenanted office building with a Restaurant on the Northeast corner of the Ground Floor and Squash Courts at Lower Ground level.

Triton Court is currently largely vacant but part of the building is still in operation.



2.0 Existing Buildings

Site Photographs



Picture 1. From the North Corner of Finsbury Square that meets with City Road



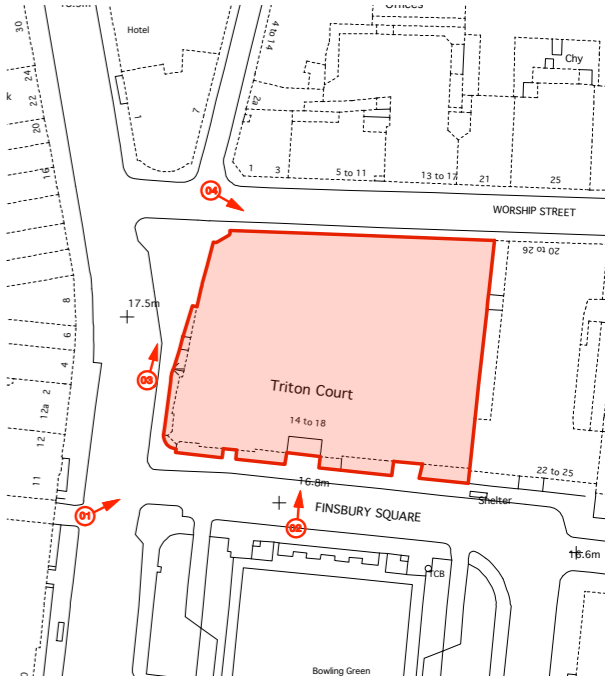
Picture 2. From Finsbury Square the current entrance



Picture 3. From City Road



Picture 4. From Worship Street



Key Plan

2.0 Existing Buildings

Site Photographs



Picture 1. From City Road to the North



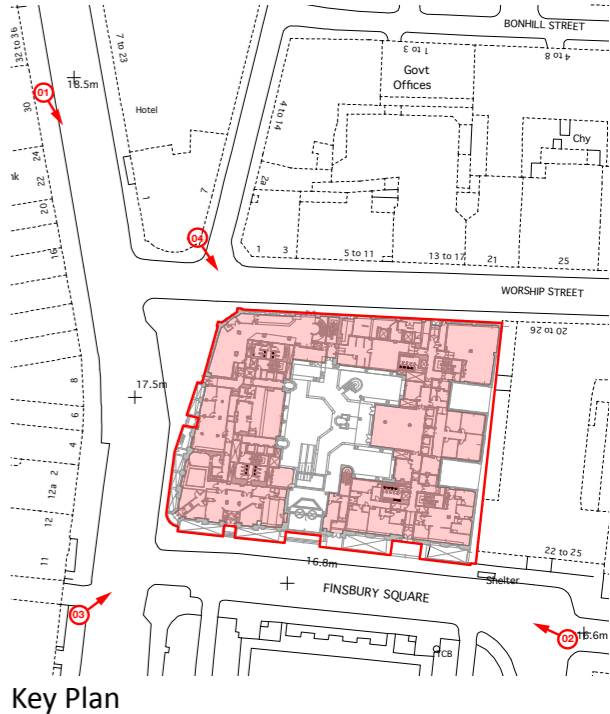
Picture 2. From the North East corner of Finsbury Square



Picture 3. From the corner of City Road and Finsbury Square



Picture 4. From the corner of Worship Street and City Road





Picture 1. Finsbury Square (north side) 1809



Picture 2. Finsbury Square (north side) c.1910



Picture 3. Ordnance Survey Map 1916



Picture 4. Ordnance Survey Map 1953-54

Finsbury Square was first laid out as a planned square of terraced townhouses around a central garden in 1777. The north side comprised of a row of thirteen houses facing the square. These were demolished in a piecemeal fashion and their sites amalgamated to make way for much larger scale commercial properties from the late 19th century onwards.

The block at the corner of City Road and Finsbury Square, with its distinctive corner tower, was the first to be built in 1904-5. This block was subsequently extended across the square to the east by four bays prior to 1916. To the east the taller five bay block was then built facing the square in 1929-30. The remaining part of the site at the corner of City Road and Worship Street was then redeveloped in the 1930s. These buildings were combined in the early 1980s to form Triton Court. During World War 2 the buildings forming Triton Court escaped serious harm. However the neighbouring site on the north side of Christopher Street was damaged beyond repair. As a result the buildings that joined the Square with Christopher Street (sites 22-25 and 26) were cleared ready for redevelopment.

Although a great number of the buildings have been developed or redeveloped in the late 19th and 20th centuries, particularly around Finsbury Square, the former street pattern remains legible across the wider conservation area. Key historic buildings and spaces include Wesley's 18th century Chapel complex on the east side of City Road, the 18th century Armoury House and the associated open field of the Honourable Artillery Company between City Road and Bunhill Row (first based in this area from 1642), and the celebrated nonconformist burial ground of Bunhill Fields Cemetery (first established in the 17th century) on the west side of City Road.



Proposed Atrium Space

4.0 Summary of Proposed Development

This application forms part of an ongoing series of proposed changes to the existing buildings that form Triton Court. The proposed redevelopment of aims to breathe new life into an historic landmark building. The proposals will create vibrant and progressive new office spaces to the most exacting contemporary standards whilst retaining and enhancing the building's historic prestige.

The building's location is seen as important in connecting the corporate landscape of the City of London and the fast growing technology economy to the North in Shoreditch. As such, it offers a unique opportunity to bring the creative workspace design ideas prevalent within Shoreditch to larger organisations.

Triton court forms a key landmark within Finsbury Square and the Bunhill Fields/ Finsbury Conservation Area. The buildings have suffered in recent times from some unsympathetic additions and alterations particularly at roof level. The proposed design aims to reveal and enhance the heritage value of Triton Court. Internally, layers of previous fit-out are being stripped back to expose original structure and features as far as possible, externally the worst additions are to be removed. Externally the existing facades are to be repaired and new windows installed.

A series of previous applications have proposed alterations to animate the existing atrium, improve street frontages and improve the quality of office space within. The first application proposed the creation of a new entrance through the buildings North elevation to form a direct pedestrian route from Worship Street to the internal atrium; the change of use of ground floor B1 office units to A3/B1 units and the new glazing to the Worship Street ground floor facade; the introduction of a new cycle ramp entrance from the Worship Street side; parking for 250 cycles and associated facilities and provision for the servicing of the building from Worship street via a new loading bay. This was approved in December 2012 - ref P122128

A second application was submitted in October 2012 - P122249. The proposals within this application sought to open and rationalise the existing floor plates to meet modern demands. A series of infills to the existing light-wells on the Eastern edge of the site were proposed allowing increased open floor space and removing the existing convoluted corridors that were formed during the 1980s works. The application was approved in June 2013

A third application was submitted in March 2013 - P2013/0916/FUL. The application proposed major demolition of additions from the 1980s at the 8th and 9th floor level and their replacement with new office and plant spaces. The application was approved on the 2nd July 2013.

5.0 Planning History

Three planning applications and an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development have already been made to Islington in respect of the proposed works to Triton Court. The details of these applications are below:

Full Planning

App No P122128

Approved December 17 2012

Change of use of parts of the lower ground floor spaces from B1 (Office) to 3 units for flexible use as B1/A3 (Office/Restaurants and Cafes). Alterations to the external elevations of the building at ground floor level on Finsbury Square, City Road and Worship Street. Associated to the proposal is the relocation and provision of a replacement service areas to be accessed from Worship Street. The laying out of a bicycle store and gymnasium, ancillary to the existing office use and the creation of a new office entrance, canopy and entrance to the bicycle store access ramp from Worship Street.

App No P122181

Certificate of Lawful Development

Certified December 21 2012

Certificate of Lawfulness (proposed) in connection with the creation of additional 1,746m of floorspace for B1 use within the existing building through the infilling of areas of a internal atrium / light well. No external changes proposed

Full Planning

App No P122249

Approved 10 June 2013

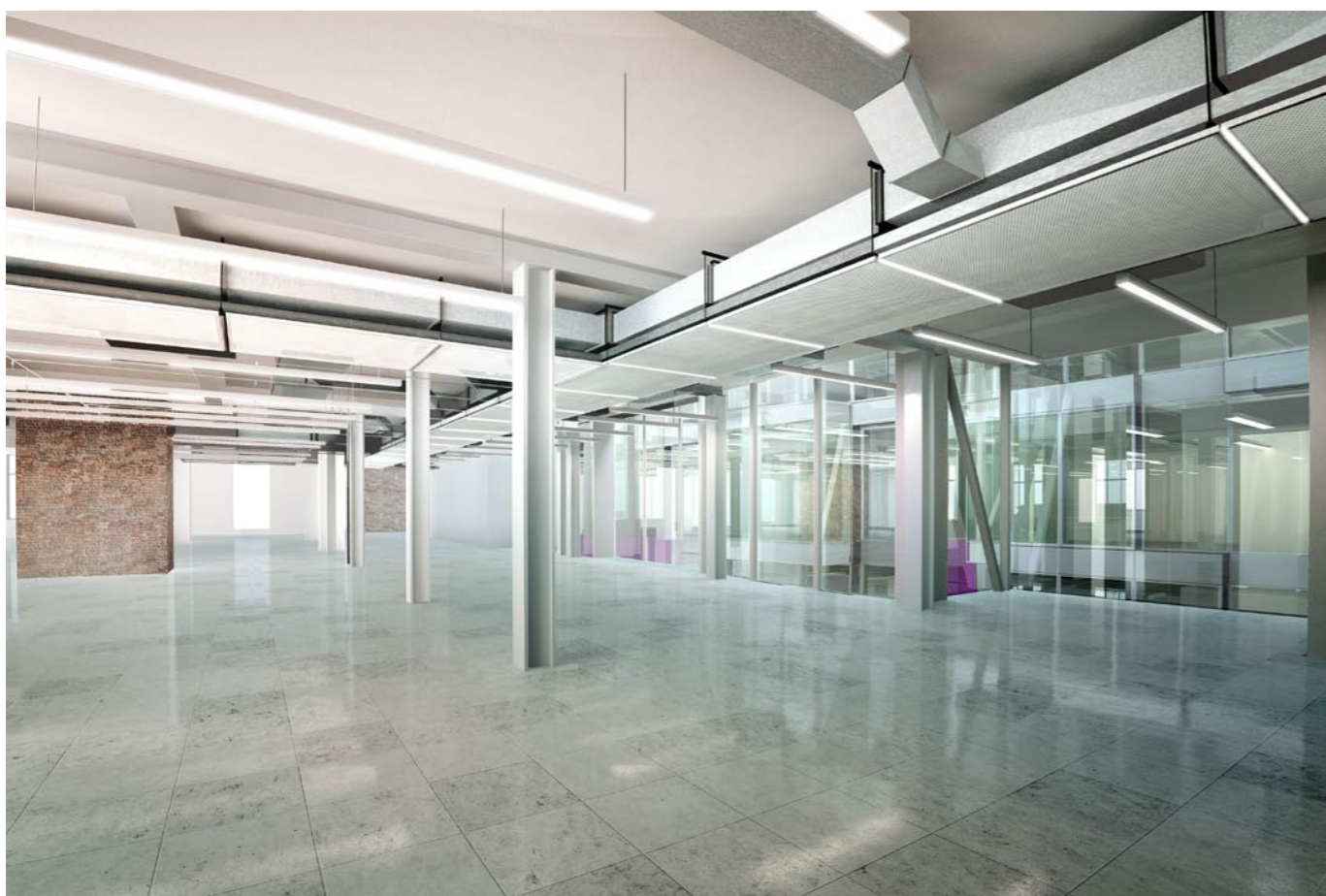
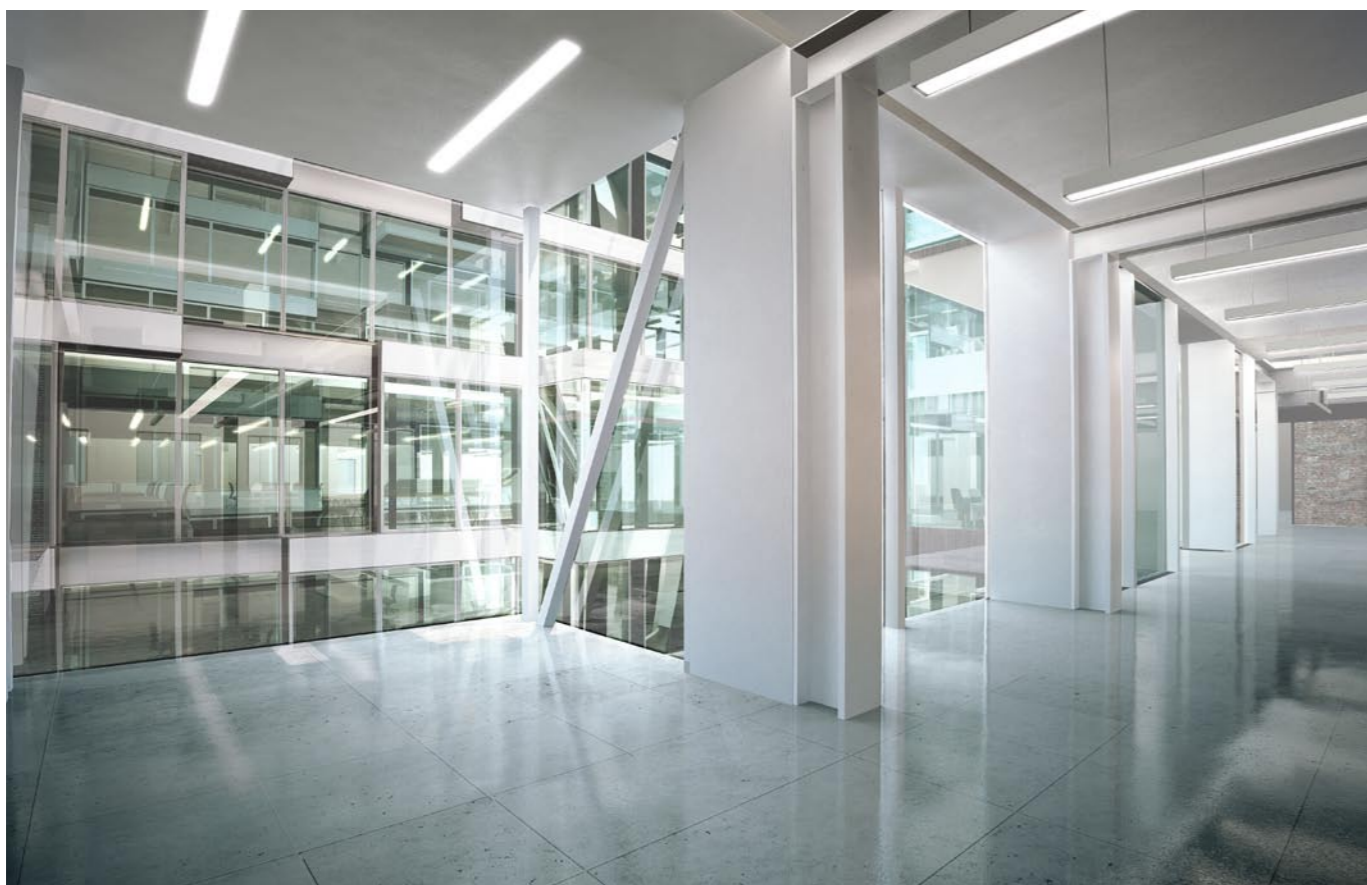
Infill of existing light well recess at ground to eighth floor and installation of fenestration on the eastern facing boundary of the site, creating approximately 761m² of additional office (B1) accommodation. This application may affect the character and appearance of a conservation area and the setting of a listed building. Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended); Section 67 and 73.

Full Planning

App No P2013/0916/FUL

Approved 02 July 2013

Demolition of existing 9th floor structure. Creation of new aluminium clad plant enclosures on 9th floor; new additional B1 office structure to 8th floor on North and South elevations; re-cladding of existing 8th floor structure. Also Conservation Area consent submitted LBI reference P2013/0918. This application may affect the character and appearance of the conservation area. Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended); section 73.



Proposed Office Space

Elevation - 01



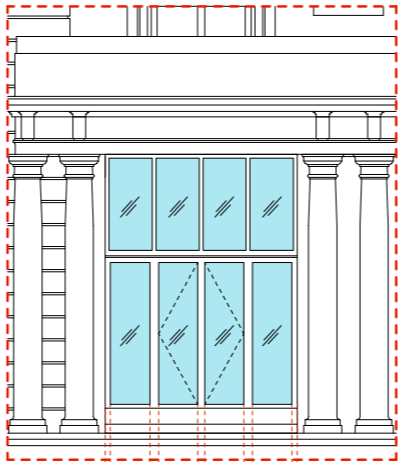
Existing west elevation

Proposed west elevation

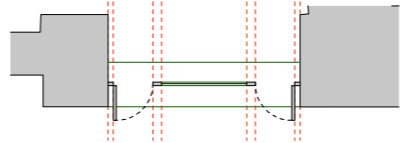
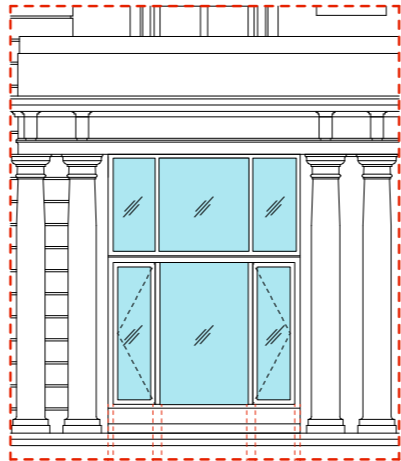
Proposed changes to existing window design

Typical large opening
Second floor west elevation - Elevation 02

Existing opening



Proposed opening



Existing Windows

Triton Court was extensively refurbished in the early 1980s and at this time the majority of the windows were replaced with windows typical of the period. The exception being the windows at ground floor on the City Road and Finsbury Square elevations where the existing ornate Edwardian frames have been retained and restored or replaced as the originals. The 1980s windows are typical of windows of the time being composed of double glazed units held in powder coated aluminium frames coloured dark brown. The windows all contain clear glass and the majority open outwards.

Given the complex nature of the elevations which stem from several separate original buildings and additions there are a large variety of window shapes and designs. The proposal is to replace the majority of windows with 'like for like' replacements using exiting mullion and transom lines. However, for a series of windows on the Finsbury Square and City Road elevations a new window design is proposed within existing openings. Here the proposal is to replace windows which contain four lights at lower level with three lights by omitting the central mullion. By creating a large central expanse of glass, views out are enhanced. Furthermore, this revised design follows the same proportions as the Edwardian ground floor windows and we feel works better with the proportions and detailing of the existing facade. See drawing PWT001 for alternative window designs.

Frames and Glass

The proposal is to replace the existing windows with new aluminium framed double glazed units. The frames are to be powder coated to a dark brown/grey. This colour is darker and less brown than the existing windows as such will blend more discreetly with the tone of the surrounding stone. The internal finish to the frames will be white. The final specification of window frames is yet to be agreed but it is intended to specify frames of reduced width to reduce the site lines of the window frames.

All frames are to open inward as opposed to the outward opening of the current window. this will prevent the necessity for internal edge protection bars which are installed currently and provide a safer alternative for openable windows.

The glass is to be low-emmissivity argon filled double glazed units. All glass is to be clear and un-tinted. High performance solar glass is proposed on the South elevation to reduce potential for unwanted heat gain.



Proposed new dormer window to NW Elevation



Proposed new opening window to SW Elevation

Additional Openings

In addition to the replacement windows, two new openings are proposed within the existing fabric. The first is for a new dormer window within the mansard roof at 7th floor level. The position of the new dormer is on the short NW facing elevation which cuts the corner between City Road and Worship Street. The dormer will be partially hidden by the existing parapet at low level. There already exists a dormer on the eights floor in this location. For these reasons we do not believe the additional window has a detrimental effect on the existing character and design of the building, instead the additional dormer creates a more even and regular elevation than the existing.

The second proposed new opening is located on the third floor on the corner of Finsbury Square and City Road. As with the dormer described above, there is a short SW elevation below the existing cupola which cuts across the corner formed by the two roads. On this corner elevation there are existing openings and windows at all levels except the third. It appears that a window was not considered previously on this location due to the statues located in-front of the external wall in this location. However, a window could be installed in this location without effecting the sculpture or its support. The existing elevation in this location is detailed with a stone reveal similar to adjacent windows but with a stone filled faux window rather than a glazed window. The proposal is to make a minimal intervention here by removing the stone infill and installing a new aluminium framed window to match those proposed on either side. See drawing PWT006 for details of proposed new openings



Context of proposed new dormer to NW Elevation



Context of proposed new opening SW Elevation

Introduction

The property comprises the block bounded by Finsbury Square on the South, City Road on the West and Worship Street on the North. Royal London House adjoining to the East was formerly part of the same property.

Triton Court is situated within the Bunhill Fields/ Finsbury Square Conservation Area and is identified as a Locally Listed Building and a Local Landmark. The adjacent Royal London House is also locally Listed (though an elapsed consent exists for demolition), as are City Gate House on the South side of the square, several buildings on the opposite side of City Road, and one on the North side of Worship Street.

Development could affect the setting of several Grade II Listed buildings: Lowdnes House northwest of Triton Court (recently refurbished as a Hotel), the Smith Memorial Fountain within Finsbury Square and Finsbury Barracks on City Road.

Development History

Triton Court was developed in three main phases. The Southwest corner cupola block, between Finsbury Square and City Road, designed by John Belcher, was “approaching completion” in 1904 and extended eastwards by four bays shortly afterwards, for the Royal London Friendly Society.

The Eastern tower block, extending between the square and Worship Street, was built for the Royal London Mutual Assurance Society in the late 1920’s, by Belcher’s former partner J.J Joass, who completed the redevelopment of the North West corner of the site between City Road and Worship Street at the end of the 1930’s.

The balancing block to the east of the tower block, which now alone retains the name of the Royal London House, was built in the 1950’s to the design of the little known H. Bramhill.

The building now called Triton House was completely refurbished in the early 1980’s by Sheppard Robson and Partners, who virtually gutted the interior, formed the double-height “mansard” roof and punched the entrance arch through the Edwardian extension.

Heritage Value

The Belcher cupola block was the earliest and probably the best part of the building and is now the only Edwardian building surviving in any form in Finsbury Square. It is a major work of a leading commercial Architect of the period. The Joass tower block is the only other surviving pre-World War II building on the square. It is one of the most important buildings of its type and the masterpiece of it’s Architect.

The 1980’s refurbishment destroyed anything of historic value inside Triton Court, but left its elevations largely intact. The double-height mansard roof is unfortunate, but does not detract excessively from the cupola and tower.

The cupola block anchors the northwest corner of Finsbury Square and terminates the vistas looking up Moorgate from as far South as Tivoli Corner of the Bank of England and down City Road from Old Street. It complements the Listed Lowdnes House and makes an effective contrast with the more modest heritage building across City Road.

The tower block forms the centrepiece of the north side of Finsbury Square, and all the post-war development had deferred to it in height and materials, if not in style.

The heritage value of Triton Court rests entirely on its external elevations, particularly the corner cupola and the tower. The proposed redevelopment strategy retains the existing external envelope and makes alterations at roof level which reduce the inappropriate massing added at 9th floor level as part of the Sheppard Robson 1980s redevelopment.

The existing current windows above ground floor levels are replacements installed as part of the 1980s redevelopment and as such are not of any heritage value in themselves. The detailing of the mullions and transoms is to the large part consistent with the detailing of the elevations.

The remaining Edwardian door and window joinery at ground floor will be retained.

8.0 Access Statement

Relevant Policies

Part M Building Regulations
BS 8300:2009
Islington Planning Standards Guidelines SPG

Ground Level

The existing buildings that form Triton Court were originally built in the 1920s and 1930s. As such some existing openings and window positions are not perfectly positioned to ensure ease of opening to all users. Although the building is not Listed, it is within a Conservation Area and is considered of architectural interest. It is therefore not proposed to alter existing openings or window designs.

Instead it is proposed that replacement window design will carefully consider the position and specification of all ironmongery to ensure windows are easily operable by all potential users.

All new windows will comply with Part M and be suitable for all potential users, including wheelchair users. All iron mongery will be specified and positioned to part M requirements. Manifestation will not be required to proposed replacement windows due to design of framing and location.

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9.0 Sustainable Design and Construction Statement

Energy

The new replacement windows are to be built to the highest and exacting sustainability standards. When combined with the existing building proposal, the whole scheme will achieve a “Very Good” BREEAM low-energy rating.

The proposed replacement windows will create a significant thermal improvement to the existing fabric and overall u-vaules of the building. Although the original facades are uninsulated solid masonry construction they are thick walls and as such have reasonably good thermal properties. The replacement of the windows is therefore the single most effective means of lowering heat-loss through the external envelope available to improve the buildings perofrmance.

Although the existing windows are double glazed the technology and performance of double glazed windows has improved greatly since their installation. The proposed replacements are to be argon filled double glazed units within thermally broken frames. Glazing is to be low emissivity to improve heat loss and prevent over heating from solar gain. In addition South facing windows will have a further High performance solar coating to prevent heat gain. Proposed U-vaules are to be 1.8 w/m2/k with G-values to the South elevation to be 0.45 or better.

New windows are to be openable by users to allow natural ventilation locally. Although it can be argued that preventing user window opening completely allows for more efficient performance of mechanical systems, this is seen as detrimental to user well being and unnecessary if window opening is managed effectively by users.

Materials

All new materials that form part of the proposal are to be of A+ rating, as set out by the BRE Green Guide to Specification. This minimises the proposal’s embodied energy and therefore its effect on the environment.

Sustainability and operation

Guidance on building operation will be clearly communicated to users and building managers . A full BMS system will also be constantly monitoring energy consumption in the building to allow future assessment and improvement of performance.

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