

Contemporary Extension to The Gatehouse, St. James's, Westminster

Our approach to the architectural and planning issues relating to heritage and conservation is highlighted here in our recent extension proposal to a Grade I Listed Building, The Gatehouse, Rutland House in the City of Westminster. In order to successfully respect historic buildings and environments whilst seeking to enhance and highlight their character, we aim to use contrasting, high quality, contemporary interventions and/or extensions, that reflect their period, in preference to making a pastiche or inferior copy of the host building.

Our proposals for a bold, contemporary, structural glass infill extension to the Gatehouse, a Grade I Listed building housing the London headquarters of an international company, in Westminster's St. James's conservation area, were recently submitted for a full application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent and have been recommended for approval by Westminster City Council. The Gatehouse is currently used as office accommodation to house the London headquarters of an international company, having been converted to offices in the 20th century. The Gatehouse's principal elevation to the courtyard remains largely intact, however, the internal courtyard has been affected by many recent alterations that have detracted from its character, including a bulky and ill-considered glazed roof dating to the 1980's. The cellular nature of the internal spaces along with the limited potential for alterations or extensions has imposed prohibitive restrictions on the use of the accommodation including a lack of an adequate reception area and a suitable conference/meeting room.

Our client's brief was therefore for the infilling of the courtyard with a two-storey glass structure that would provide a reception area and a conference room. Our client also favoured a striking and contemporary design, rather than a traditional and conservative one, in order to reflect the company's identity and status.

Our proposals include the removal of the existing glazed roof, the demolition of the modern northern boundary wall and the addition of a two-storey structural glass infill extension. The infill extension is supported by a cantilevered steel structure lightly anchored to the Gatehouse's façade with minimal fixings in the location of the demolished northern boundary wall.

The extension is designed to reveal the principal façade of the Gatehouse from the street through its transparency and minimalist structure, its hidden M&E services and discrete lighting, as well as the treatment of its finishes that includes a cobbled floor that connects the internal and external finishes. Further details on the project can be viewed [here](#).

