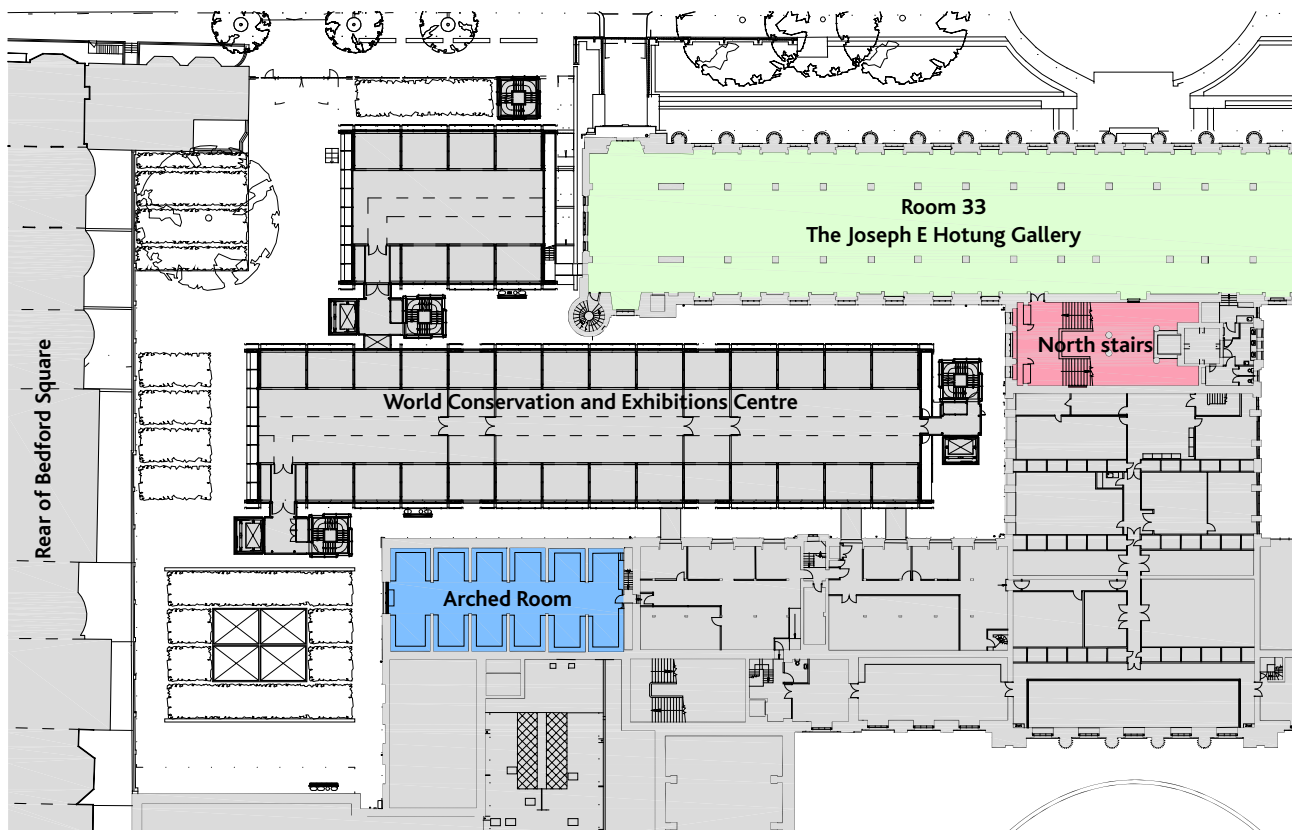


WORLD CONSERVATION AND EXHIBITIONS CENTRE

THE ARCHED ROOM AND BEDFORD SQUARE –
THE IMPACT ON DAYLIGHT



Views and daylight impact

The impact of daylight and sunlight on the Joseph E Hotung Gallery and the North stairs was dealt with in earlier fact sheets. This fact sheet deals with the impact on the Arched Room and the rear of the Bedford Square properties.

The new proposals for the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre will both retain and improve the views to and from the Arched Room window. By placing more of the new Centre underground, it has been possible to remove the rear pavilion from the design to provide a clear view through the Arched Room window to the Bedford Square properties. As well as removing the present clutter of temporary buildings in the back yard, the new proposals include the landscaping of this area which will provide an improved view for the occupiers of the Bedford Square properties.

The Arched Room

The Arched Room was built in 1839–1841, immediately following the completion of the North Wing, as a library designed to maximise storage by utilising high-level space right up to the ceiling, as well as using the basement.

In the new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre scheme, Pavilion 5 is kept below Level 2, providing a clear view from the Arched Room to the rear of Bedford Square. This proposal will remove the present partial obscuring from the stone store between the Arched Room and Bedford Square and create a view to and from the Arched Room not seen for over 25 years. However, the disadvantage of this is that the high afternoon light levels, sunshine and solar heat gain at the west end of the room will continue to be a problem to the users, and consequently a blind will have to be maintained in



Current Arched Room view obscured by a Portakabin



Proposed Arched Room with unobscured view

order to modify the conditions. The Museum proposes to replace the existing blind with one which has increased translucence; this will help maintain the view of the Bedford Square properties at the same time as reducing the detrimental effects of direct sunlight into the room.

The north windows of the Arched Room have always been of limited value in lighting the eastern bays of the room; these are generally dark due to the obstruction caused by the perforated cast iron walkways which provide access to the high-level book stacks. The increase in the void between the new World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre and the bays on the north side of the room will increase the daylight penetrating through these windows. The Arched Room will, however, continue to need additional artificial lighting in order to provide adequate light by which to work.

In considering the impact of the new building on the adjacent rooms, the Museum has identified an opportunity to carry out a range of improvements to the Arched Room which will help to restore it to its original glory. These measures include the replacement of the current functional modern lighting with fittings that are more sympathetic and appropriate; these in turn will enhance the architectural qualities of the space as well as the working environment. A more sympathetic entry to the room from the main part of the Museum will also be provided by the removal of the current mezzanine floor and through the provision of more appropriate and consistent furniture.

The Bedford Square properties

The proposed World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre, with its new landscaped western perimeter and the substantial removal of Pavilion 5, will maintain adequate daylight to the rear of the properties in Bedford Square, and will improve the current view from their rear rooms. In particular, the environment of Bedford Square will be significantly enhanced by the removal of the ad hoc arrangement of temporary and low quality service buildings which currently clutter the site, and their replacement with the new Centre and a belt of landscaping on the boundary.



Proposed landscaping outside the Arched Room window

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG
 ☉ Holborn, Russell Square, Tottenham Court Road
 Telephone +44 (0)20 7323 8000
information@britishmuseum.org
www.britishmuseum.org

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