



Restoration and Refurbishment

Programme:

Independent Options Appraisal Report and Feasibility Studies.

Background

The Palace of Westminster was re-built over a 30-year period in 1834 following a fire and as the practice of democracy in the UK has evolved, the Palace has been constantly adapted over the years. Since the post war era, only disparate internal restoration or renewal works have been undertaken.

As a result, the existing mechanical and electrical plant within the Palace is no longer fit for purpose and the current maintenance cost (including lifecycle replacement) is relatively high. The current annual expenditure offers limited value for money and can only deliver short term temporary solutions. Business continuity risk has continued to steadily rise and whilst the Members and users do not always see the full effects, building services issues are ever present and the risk of a catastrophic failure is increasing.

Project Objectives

The project objectives, which also form the strategic business case are: -

- **Condition and Risk** – The Palace is reaching the point where its condition is deteriorating, risks are growing and partial patching and mending interventions are no longer sufficient.
- **Asset Protection** - There is a fundamental requirement is for the Palace to remain safe from fire, water damage, security threats, decay and dilapidation.
- **Decent Standards of Accommodation** - Parliament has to provide decent standards of accommodation for all those who work within it, or visit.
- **Brand and Reputational Image** - The Palace is part of the UK brand, instantly recognised and appreciated around the world.
- **Difficulty of Combining Renovation with Ongoing Occupation** - The backlog of maintenance work that has built up over a long period of time, is above all because of the great difficulty of carrying out fundamental renovation work on the inside of the Palace while Parliament remains in continuous occupation.

BCL Involvement

BCL worked on two distinct elements of the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Refurbishment Programme: -

- The publication and the launch of the Independent Options Appraisal Report (IOA) – of which BCL Director, Andrew Garbutt had previously led the Technical Team for the production of this report, as well as authoring the the Approach, Methodology and schedule options for delivering the construction works
- The Programme Management for a series of inter-related Feasibility Studies for a selection of potential improvement projects within the overall Refurbishment and Restoration Programme.

The publication of the Independent Options Appraisal Report (IOA)

A management consultant team (of which Andrew Garbutt was a director and Technical Lead) delivered to the Client an independently produced, costed, options appraisal of a number of Scenarios, in order to enable Parliament to reach a well-founded decision in principle on the means of restoring and renewing the Palace, whilst maintaining business continuity; and to pave the way for an outline business case (OBC) that conforms to public sector good practice as set out in the HM Treasury Green Book.

BCL then took one of the lead roles in presenting and explaining the concepts of the report to: -

- The Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of the House of Lords
- The management committee of the House of Lords
- A selection of Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords
- A selection of the UK and International Press

The production of a series of inter-related Feasibility Studies

BCL project managed the production and delivery of four separate but inter-linked Feasibility Studies produced by international Architects and Engineering consultants.

The studies were: -

- the potential to create a primary goods and Facilities Management (FM) distribution spine route in the basement
- Four possible options for a new Service Yard
- Options for how the courtyards could be used as a zone of collaborative / public interface space
- the potential to create a combined New Main Entrance, Visitor Centre, Education Centre, and Media Centre within the Palace boundary

The potential to create a primary goods and Facilities Management (FM) distribution spine route in the basement

- The study concluded that such potential does exist, subject to coordination with the MEP redesign. There is the potential to improve catering operations, consolidating refrigerated storage. In addition, there is the opportunity to improve vertical circulation through new lift access to the basement and the potential to create additional accommodation at basement level if further courtyards were excavated and new basement areas created.

Four possible options for a new Service Yard – of which three require the use of part of Victoria Tower Gardens (the area where the new temporary Education Centre has been built) with one placed completely below ground with a ramped access road and the fourth is kept within the current palace boundary but is not as large

Options for how the courtyards could be used as a zone of collaborative / public interface space - the study looked at; Star Chamber Court, Cloister Court, Whips Court, Boiler House Court, State Officers Court, Chancellors Court and the general opportunity to re-present the other courtyards given the possible change to Goods In/Out distribution covered in the Basement Utilisation Study

As part of the analysis possible options included glazing over Star Chamber Court and State Officer Court to create new atrium spaces that can provide new meet and greet spaces and collaboration areas and touchdown work spaces for members. The analysis of these has considered the structural, MEP, Acoustic, Fire Engineering and Planning and Heritage implications and considerations of such options.

The potential to create a combined New Main Entrance, Visitor Centre, Education Centre, and Media Centre within the Palace boundary - The study considered an alternative use for the New Palace Yard Car Park and the potential to locate these combined functions in one part of the Palace.

Budget

Approximately £100,000

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and review took place throughout the programme and included:

- Regular Project Management Meetings
- An agreed process for producing the reports from 'Outline' through to 'Final' where each version was signed off at the appropriate milestone by the key stakeholders
- Each 'Final Report' was then subjected to the lead consultants Risk and Compliance Committee, before being submitted to the Client.

Results

Success of this consultancy intervention is evidenced by:

- The IOA was accepted by both Houses and was then further scrutinised and debated by a Joint Committee.
- The IOA was positively reported on by the invited media through several channels including the International, National and Local Press; National Television; and Trade Press.
- The Feasibility Studies were welcomed by the identified key stakeholders who agreed that these studies were both value adding and appropriate for the Programme of Restoration and Refurbishment
- The Feasibility Studies were accepted by the Client and formed the basis of evidence examined by the Joint Committee

Reference: Nina Cuiffardi

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Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme