

## **Kensington Palace – Orangery New Build**

### **Curatorial Statement of Support**

In preparation for the forthcoming application for a new building to be attached to the rear of the Orangery at Kensington, the curatorial team has been undertaking background research. This has included physical analysis of the building, a thorough documentary trawl of the historical sources and archaeological evaluations or test pitting. The team has also approached the design and massing of the new structure in collaboration with the architect, in order to achieve a satisfactory result.

Archaeological analysis has uncovered a complex sequence of deposits to the rear of the building, revealing evidence from the Iron Age onwards. Much of this is ephemeral, but more substantial features include robbed out walls and ditches which pre-date the construction of the building. Some of the existing features, such as the public lavatories and their associated services, and a large tree will have invariably disturbed or destroyed archaeological deposits. The curatorial team recognises the importance of the archaeological resource, and so long as the area is properly and appropriately excavated before the commencement of the works, then it is felt that the loss of archaeological remains can be justified on the basis that our understanding of the Orangery building will be enhanced as a result.

The scale, massing and degree of embellishment which have been agreed are the result of a long process of negotiation and discussion between the architect, the curatorial team and Historic England. The basis of our approach was to ensure that, while the new addition has an architectural character in its own right, it should be entirely subordinate to the three principal elevations of the building, having little embellishment, and always congruous with the architecture of the Orangery or with motifs found elsewhere in the palace complex. We feel that this has been achieved by matching of brickwork, use of Portland stone and the minimal presence of decoration.

Some internal modification is needed; namely the piercing of the internal walls and panelling in two places to facilitate access between the Orangery and the new addition. Analysis has suggested that the existing panelling was entirely replaced in 1898, while the location of the new doors has been adjusted to avoid structural niches which lie behind. It is felt that, with good design and a sensitive approach to the piercing of the masonry, the impact to the building can be mitigated.

Overall, the curatorial team supports the approach adopted to the Orangery.

**Dr Lee Prosser**

**Curator – Historic Buildings**

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