

NEWS

Eric Parry plans ‘radical repositioning’ of City office block

By Jim Dunton | 5 September 2023



Proposals would deliver three extra storeys at 15-year-old Holborn Viaduct building designed by Rolfe Judd



Eric Parry Architects has lodged proposals for a “radical repositioning” of a 15-year-old Rolfe Judd-designed office building at one of the City of London’s western gateways.

Its plans for 40 Holborn Viaduct would strip the 2008 steel-framed block back to its sub- and super-structure and add three new storeys – as well as extending the building outwards towards Holborn Circus with new planted balconies.

The redeveloped building would be 12 storeys tall and have a lower-ground floor and two basement levels.

Parry’s plans, for client Nuveen Real Estate, would boost office floorspace at the 0.32ha site from the current 20,579sq m to 24,108sq m. Retail floorspace on the site would also increase from the current 183sq m to 229sq m. Additionally, the proposals feature a pocket park.

Documents supporting the application said the existing building was “defensive” in appearance and that its façade of concrete panels clad with 25mm-thick stone veneer had been the main issue in a “large warranty claim” in 2018.



Rolfe Judd’s 40 Holborn Viaduct building, which was completed in 2008. The practice also designed the neighbouring Atlantic House building

Parry’s design and access statement for the project said the façade looked “stained and shabby” because water was penetrating the stones and causing greening in some areas.

The new building will feature more windows, particularly on its Charterhouse Street elevation. Its ground floor and lower-ground levels will be entirely glazed.

Parry said the project was a “radical repositioning” of 40 Holborn Viaduct that was targeting a BREEAM “outstanding” rating.



The proposed extensions include planted balconies

“The proposals will create a fully electric and carbon-efficient building with a refreshed and revitalised appearance,” the practice said in the design and access statement for the project.

“The refurbished building will have a lifespan similar to that for a new construction, while significantly reducing its operational carbon footprint.”

Nuveen Real Estate acquired the building in 2012. Its project team for the refurbishment includes project manager Avison Young, QS Arcadis, structural engineer AKTII, building and services consultant WSP, and façade engineer Arup.



A new pocket park would face Holborn Circus

City of London spearheads circular built environment initiative



By LDN Guest Post

08 November 2024

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City of London Corporation are partnering with circular built environment consultants Maconda Solutions and Upcyclea as founding members to launch ROMULUS – an initiative designed to create public-private partnerships to stimulate a circular economy market in the capital. The groundbreaking initiative is set to establish best practice and provide evidence for targeted policy interventions, and is the only one of its type and scale with the participation of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and DEFRA.

The initial year-long pilot is endorsed and sponsored by City of London Corporation, making them the first local authority to have direct access to circular insights from live building projects. They will work closely with Eric Parry Architects, Multiplex and Clarion Housing Group as well as other major industry partners. Together, a community of key industry stakeholders will anchor the initiative to drive the increased use of reclaimed materials and trace material flows using a common data template in the form of material passports.

ROMULUS is an invaluable resource for local authorities, developers, contractors and architects alike. It brings the built environment together to share knowledge, develop policy and encourage collaboration. ROMULUS is unique in engaging a collaborative platform with dynamic real-life insights, offering users access to:

- An exclusive community for resource reuse that will use shared audit data and material passports to achieve an unparalleled level of building transparency
- First-hand engagement with live developments, including access to collaborative stakeholder meetings, to share and learn from circular best practice
- Real time studies of circular economy building projects across London

The initiative has been developed by Maconda in collaboration with Upcyclea, as well as leading experts from UK universities within the Build Zero initiative. This means ROMULUS offers robust data on the environmental impact of decisions made by its users – tracking potential savings in carbon, water and waste for recovered materials, as well as financial savings. The largest source of carbon emissions in the Square Mile is commercial and industrial buildings (71%) and so the Romulus initiative is expected to significantly aid the City of London to reach net zero by 2040.

ROMULUS will focus on London initially, with the ambition of rolling out nationally after the pilot. It builds on the success of Maconda’s consultancy work to improve the circularity of significant building projects across the capital, including the UK first introduction of material passports at One Nine Elms.

James Adams, MD of Maconda Solutions, said: “ROMULUS was inspired by my experience in the building sector. I’ve seen and experienced first-hand the frustrations of trying to work in a more circular way. In ROMULUS, our intent is to bring together local authorities, developers and other key industry players to create a viable and scalable circular economy market within the built environment. We see a huge opportunity for London to claim its place as the circular capital of the world and this movement will deliver even more impact as it takes off. We’d love to hear from any organisations who are interested in joining the pilot.”

Chairman of the City of London Corporation Planning and Transportation Committee, Shravan Joshi, said: “The trial of ROMULUS brings together a wide range of key stakeholders in construction from across the City, from architects to developers, to collaborate on increasing and streamlining material reuse from construction. The data insights we will gain from this trial will be invaluable for the development of our Circular Economy Framework and to embed circular principles into local building projects. With the built environment industry contributing around 40% of global carbon emissions, initiatives like Romulus are vital in signalling to investors that we are committed to meeting our Net Zero goals, through sustainable growth in construction within the City.”

Justin Sayer RIBA, Associate Director for Eric Parry Architects, said: “We are currently working with Maconda to establish a material passport for 40 Holborn Viaduct. This is an exemplary retrofit project that will reuse approximately 70% of the existing building material in the proposals, including re-using the stone from the facades as terrazzo finishes to the interiors and public realm. Accurate material passport information will allow contractors to plan the mining of materials from buildings for re-use either at the time of deconstruction or from local authority/private enterprise material storage sites. The joined up circular economy thinking embodied by the ROMULUS initiative will transform the construction industry and help counter the unsustainable carbon costs of new material construction.”

Emily Gabb, Head of Strategic Partnerships, NLA – London’s built environment community, said: “NLA is committed to the retrofit and circular economy agenda in London through our dedicated expert panel and strong focus on these topics across our research and programmed activity. We welcome the Romulus pilot being led by the City of London and are delighted to support the launch and trial period.”

The pilot is set to begin in January 2025. Local authorities, developers, contractors and architects interested in joining the ROMULUS initiative can register to join the launch event – taking place at the London Centre Gallery on Monday 18 November 2024 between 15:30-18:00 (GMT) – [here](#).

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