

# News

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## **Morgan Sindall Construction appointed to first phase of major development at the site of Oliver Twist workhouse**

Morgan Sindall Construction has secured a Pre-Contract Services Agreement (PCSA) to oversee and enable the safe excavation and removal of over 2,000 burials at the site of the former Strand Union Workhouse in Fitzrovia, said to have inspired Dickens' most famous work.

The project for Middlesex Annexe LLP, a subsidiary of the University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Charity, is part of The Bedford Passage Development, which falls within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, and is part of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan.

The scheme will see 40 per cent of the existing buildings retained, including the imposing Grade II listed workhouse. While new public space and communal gardens, designed to reveal and enhance the historic character of the listed building, will be created within the heart of Fitzrovia.

As part of the wider development plan, Morgan Sindall Construction is due to deliver a new mixed-use development consisting of commercial, healthcare and residential space behind the workhouse. The eight storey building will house 34 residential units in the heart of Fitzrovia, approximately 70 per cent of which will be affordable for social rent and for key workers. The building will provide circa 5,000 square feet of commercial space and healthcare facilities including a new MRI Imaging Suite with six new MRI machines at basement level.

Under the first phase of work on the development, Morgan Sindall Construction is delivering the enabling works at the site. The multifaceted works package will see the company support and enable archaeologists to safely excavate and remove thousands of bodies buried at the site, linked to its historic use as a local cemetery and workhouse.

Led by senior project manager, James Kidgell, the Morgan Sindall Construction team will support the archaeologists to remove the remains and other objects of historical interest under carefully controlled supervision, including gaining approval from Historic England for the works.

The enabling works package involves a complex phasing of temporary and permanent works to enable the archaeologists to safely access their work areas while excavating to depths of approximately four and a half metres, predominantly by hand.

In total, an estimated 7,000 cubic metres of soil will be excavated, separated and then reviewed for bone fragments with an estimated duration of between 12 and 18 months for all the works.

During these works, three other buildings at the front of the site will be refurbished by another contractor, making collaboration and effective coordination fundamental to the success of both projects.

Richard Dobson, area director for Morgan Sindall Construction's London office, said: "This is a fascinating project in an area of London that has huge cultural resonance on a global scale and it's our privilege to be working alongside the expert archaeological team to enable the safe excavation and removal of these precious remains.

"This is a delicate and complex operation that will be delivered while works on a number of live projects around the site continue at pace. This requires expert coordination, cross-party

collaboration and the experience of working effectively with minimum disruption on major schemes on logistically challenging, tight, urban sites.

“This is a challenge our team has the experience and expertise to deliver upon and we look forward to enabling our colleagues to safely secure the historic legacy of the site, while work on the development continues to schedule.”

The excavation works are due to start in January 2020. Once the enabling works are completed, works to the main building will commence in 2021.

Morgan Sindall Construction is currently on site at a number of key schemes across central London, including a package of works for Hackney Council worth a combined total of around £97.5 million. Appointed via the Southern Construction Framework, the company is on site delivering the new state-of-the-art Britannia Leisure Centre and public realm improvements under a £53.8 million contract and a new secondary school and sixth form, the City of London Academy Shoreditch Park, under a £43.7 million contract.

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