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Planning and Development
Camden Council
Camden Town Hall
London
WC1H 8ND

Our ref: LEO/SNE/HSC/U0022869

Your ref: PP-11995081

05 May 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)
Physics Building, Gower Street, WC1E 6BT
Applications for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

On behalf of our client, University College London, we write to submit an application for full planning permission and listed building consent for the refurbishment of the ground floor corridor at the Physics Building, Gower Street, WC1E 6BT ('the Site').

Listed Building Consent is sought for:

"Removal and replacement of existing flooring, electrical boxing and servicing, two radiators, lighting, doors, water fountain, and ceiling tiles, blocking up of one door, installation of ACO drain, and the installation of fire safety measures and other related refurbishment works."

Full Planning Permission is sought for:

"Installation of new ACO drain by the entrance door of the Physics Building."

Background

The Physics Building is located on Gower Street and is situated north-west of the main UCL Bloomsbury Campus. The site is currently used for educational purposes by University College London (UCL).

The Site is designated on the Council's Policy Map as within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Physics Building is part of the Grade I Listed Building entry '*University College (University of London) and attached railings to north and south wings*' (listing ref: 1113056). There are also several other listed buildings nearby which form part of the UCL campus.

The Site has a PTAL rating of 6b owing to its proximity to Euston Square underground station. Russell Square

and Euston underground, overground and railway stations are also within a short walking distance. There are also several bus routes serving the area.

Planning History

From a review of the Council's online planning register, we have provided a summary of the relevant planning applications relating to the Site.

On 22 April 2015, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2015/0864/L) was granted for **"Refurbishment works to rooms F14/F15 of UCL Physics Building, including partial demolition of existing structure."**

On 26 September 2014, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2013/0397/L) was granted for **"Installation of 2 x condenser units at roof level and associated pipework at roof level and to north elevation second/third floor level and internal alterations at second and third floor level all in connection with associated refurbishment of the Physics Building (Class D1)."**

On 26 September 2014, Planning Permission (ref. 2013/0396/P) was granted for **"Installation of 2 x condenser units at roof level and associated pipework at roof level and to north elevation second/third floor level all in connection with associated refurbishment of the Physics Building (Class D1)."**

On 26 April 2012, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2012/1390/L) was granted for **"Alterations in association with internal re-routing of existing ductwork, installation of pipes linked to air handling equipment on roof of existing plant area, alterations to north elevations to accommodate louvers and internal refurbishment of labs at 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors."**

On 26 April 2012, Planning Permission (ref. 2012/0762/P) was granted for **"Alterations in association with internal re-routing of existing ductwork, installation of pipes linked to air handling equipment on roof of existing plant area and alterations to north elevations to accommodate louvers."**

On 28 November 2011, Planning Permission (ref. 2011/4954/P) and Listed Building Consent (ref. 2011/4960/L) was granted for **"Erection of enclosure on sixth floor flat roof to house gas safety cabinet, including installation of flue and raised steel platform with stairs to existing university building."**

On 03 September 2009, Planning Permission (ref. 2009/2311/P) and Listed Building Consent (ref. 2009/2460/L) was granted for **"Erection of a concrete storage for liquid Nitrogen enclosed within a mesh compound fence in the UCL Physics Yard (Class D1)."**

On 09 October 2008, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2008/2872/L) was granted for **"Internal alterations at basement level and external alterations including the installation of fume duct (250mm diameter) on south elevation from ground floor to roof level (terminating 3.0m above parapet of existing roof level plant room)."**

On 09 October 2008, Planning Permission (ref. 2008/4205/P) was granted for **"Installation of fume duct (250mm diameter) on south elevation from ground floor to roof level (terminating 3.0m above parapet of existing roof level plant room)."**

On 27 September 2007, Planning Permission (ref. 2007/3580/P) and Listed Building Consent (ref. 2007/3935/L) was granted for **"Installation of air conditioning unit (to replace existing plant) on rear first floor flat roof (Gower Court elevation)."**

On 10 June 2005, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2005/0718/L) was granted for **“Installation of roof mounted plant, replacement door to basement lightwell on south elevation, alterations to part ground floor layout, mezzanine floor at basement level all in connection with the continued use of the building as an education/research facility.”**

On 10 June 2005, Planning Permission (ref. 2005/0716/P) was granted for **“Installation of roof mounted plant, replacement door to basement lightwell on the south elevation and internal alterations at basement and ground floor level all in connection with the continued use of the building as an education/research facility.”**

On 01 September 2004, Listed Building Consent (ref. 2004/1558/L) was granted for **“Installation of mechanical ventilation plant on the roof and associated internal works.”**

On 01 September 2004, Planning Permission (ref. 2004/1557/P) was granted for **“Installation of mechanical ventilation plant on the roof.”**

On 14 January 2004, Planning Permission (ref. 2003/3238/P) was granted for **“Retention of a transformer compound for a maximum time period of up to 31st December 2004.”**

On 25 May 1988, Planning Permission (ref. 8800086) was granted for **“The erection of a 1.5 metre diameter television dish aerial on the roof of the Physics Building as shown on your drawing 6/101/3.”**

On 01 May 1979, Planning Permission (ref. 28048) was granted for **“Erection of dish antenna on the plant room roof.”**

Proposals

Following a review by UCL, a schedule of works is proposed to the corridor, at ground floor level of the Physics Building, to help provide an improved working environment and fire safety improvements, whilst also providing more-efficient installations. The majority of works proposed relate to the internal fabric of the building, however a single external proposal is brought forward relating to the installation of a drainage system at the entrance of the building. As such, planning permission and listed building consent is sought for the refurbishment of the Physics Building Corridor.

For ease of reference, a summary of the proposed works has been listed below. More details can be found in the supporting drawings, and schedule of works, prepared by Porter Raper.

1. Flooring – removal of existing floor finish; application of levelling compound; installation of Amtico timber flooring and Amtico Spacia boarder floor finish; installation of Forbo Entrance matting; damaged flooring to be repaired; and installation of new metal trimming around the existing electrical floor boxes.
2. Electrical – removal of existing electrical boxing and redundant servicing to be replaced with modern boxing either side of the corridor.
3. Radiators – two existing radiators to be replaced with new radiators and fitted with new radiator covers.

4. Doors – blocking up of the door to Room E15; replacement of the doors to rooms E18 and E20; upgrade of heritage doors within the lobby including French polishing and new architraves; and ease adjust and upgrade of door closers and fire/ smoke seals.
5. Water Fountain – replacement of existing water fountain.
6. Ceilings – replacement of existing metal ceiling tiles, including new LED lighting within grid.
7. Lighting – removal of dated general lighting and emergency lighting; and installation of new LED strip lighting and emergency lighting within suspended ceiling areas.
8. Walls - redecoration of walls and ceilings; and pigeon hole to be replaced with 1m wide display cabinet and 2 standing laptop desks.
9. Signage - renewal of directional and door signage in accordance with UCL signage manual/guidance.
10. Drainage – new ACO drain to be installed by the entrance door and to be connected to the existing gully to improve drainage in the area, which is currently causing damp issues.

Local Development Framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications and applications for listed building consent to be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The London Borough of Camden’s Local Development Framework comprises of the following planning policy documents: The London Plan (2021) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

Camden also have several adopted Planning Guidance documents which are also a material consideration.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is a material consideration.

Statutory Legislation

Statute regarding the heritage environment is relevant to this application. Both the site’s historic fabric and the surrounding environment have been carefully considered in the development of the proposals having regard for the statutory legislation set out below.

Section 16 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent, special regard shall be paid to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out that local planning authorities should pay special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of historic or architectural interest which it possesses when considering applications.

Section 72 of the same Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

National Planning Policy Framework

Under paragraph 194 of the NPPF, in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting.

Paragraph 197 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Where a development proposal will lead to a less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 202).

Planning Assessment

Design and Heritage

Policy D1 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to secure high quality design that, amongst other things, respects local context and character and preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets.

Policy D2 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to preserve and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, especially the conservation areas and listed buildings. To maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area. The Council will also resist development that would cause harm to the significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting or would cause harm to its special architectural and historical interest.

The proposed works seek to enhance UCL's facilities through improving operational efficiency, existing safety measures, and the quality and appearance of the building's interior. The proposed refurbishment works consist of removing and replacing several outdated elements of the corridor, including the flooring, electrical boxing and servicing, lighting, doors, water fountain, and ceiling tiles. Proposals also include blocking up of one door, the installation of improved fire safety measures and other related refurbishment works including redecoration and polishing of doors.

The proposed refurbishment works would seek to utilise the existing fixtures and fittings and provide like for like replacements, where possible. In addition, for ceiling installations such as lighting, this would be installed into areas of suspended ceiling, thus not impacting any historic fabric. As the proposed works are minor in nature and the majority of installations and fixings replicate existing elements and are reversible, it is considered that the proposals would not cause harm to the special architectural or historical interest of the buildings, and in certain instances benefit the historic fabric through repair works being included in the refurbishment proposal.

The majority of works are internal changes, with the only external change being adjacent to the entrance door with limited visual impact from neighbouring areas. Therefore, the proposals would not affect views of the site from the Conservation Area and will therefore maintain the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed works are therefore considered to be in full accordance with the Local Plan Policy D1 and D2, as well as relevant national policy. Furthermore, the works would meet the statutory tests of Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Educational use

Local Plan Policy C2 states that Camden will support the investment plans of educational, health, scientific and research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden, London and the UK.

The refurbishment of this space will assist in providing modern, fit-for-purpose teaching and circulation spaces which meet the current requirements of students and staff of the university. The proposed works will enhance the existing educational use within the Physics building, the proposal therefore complies with Local Plan Policy C2.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed development complies with relevant policies of the Camden Local Plan, namely Policies D1, D2 and C2. Furthermore, the works would accord with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Section 16 of the NPPF.

The proposed works to facilitate the refurbishment of the physics corridor would be sensitive to the heritage asset and would not involve disturbance or further interventions to the listed fabric so to undermine its significance. The proposal is also limited predominately to the interior of the building so would also preserve the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area.

Therefore, we consider that the proposal is accords with the Development Plan and should be determined positive without delay.

Application Enclosures

As part of the submission on the Planning Portal, we enclose the following documents:

- Application Form, prepared by Gerald Eve;
- Community Infrastructure Levy From, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Gerald Eve;

- Drawings;
 - Site Location Plan (ref. LB032-SW2207-004), prepared by Potter Raper;
 - Site Layout Plan (ref. LB032-SW2207-000), prepared by Potter Raper;
 - Proposed Plan (ref. LB032-SW2207-001), prepared by Potter Raper;
 - Proposed Floor Finishes Plan (ref. LB032-SW2207-002), prepared by Potter Raper;
 - Demolition Reflected Ceiling Plan (ref. LB032-SW2207-003), prepared by Potter Raper;
 - Proposed Lighting Drawing (ref. LAYOUT_159391_GD_UCL SW2207 PHYSICS BUILDING CORRIDORS_R0), prepared by Concord;
- Photographs with Markups (ref. SW2207 mark up 1-7);
- Schedule of Works (ref. LB032 BEAMS Phase 3 Work);
- Specification documents;
 - Physics Corridor Refurbishment Trade Preamble's - Refurbishment of the finishes and electrical services within the Physics building at the UCL Bloomsbury campus;
- Lighting specification documents;
 - Rubico LED 600 - RUBICO LED 600x600 HE 4K DAL;
 - Optix Surface Accessories - OPTIX S INFILL 600MM;
 - Optix Surface 1200 Direct - Indirect Medium Output -OPTIX SURFACE 1200x200 2 LINE D/I 4000K ALU DAL;
 - Saturn Data Sheet; and
 - CALC_159391_GD_UCL SW2207 PHYSICS BUILDING CORRIDORS_R0.

The application fee of £234.00 (plus £64.00 Planning Portal fee) has been paid via Planning Portal.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Neal (0203 486 3312) or Hannah Scott (0207 518 7271) of this office.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours faithfully,



Gerald Eve LLP