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Your Ref: PP-12588566

25 March 2024

UCL Student Centre, 27-28 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0AW
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application for Advertisement Consent

We write on behalf of our client, University College London (UCL) ('the Applicant'), to submit an application for Advertisement Consent for the installation of window vinyls on the front and side elevations of the UCL Student Centre, 27-28 Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0AW (the 'Site').

Advertisement consent is sought for the following:

"Installation of 4 x window vinyls to the right of, 4 x window vinyls to the left of and 3 x window vinyls above the main entrance of the UCL Student Centre fronting Gordon Street, and 5 x window vinyls along the vehicle access route, to the left of the main entrance off Gordon Street."

Background

As UCL heads towards its Bicentennial celebration year in 2026, various stakeholders are working together to build awareness and brand presence across their buildings in the Bloomsbury area. Many visitors are unaware of the incredible research and work that has been undertaken at UCL, and they feel it is important to be able to showcase what they bring to not only the local, but also the wider global community. One way they would like to do this is to install some window vinyls in a few locations on the outer edges of what they recognise as our central space of 'campus'. Focusing on three buildings of importance; the Student Centre, the Engineering Building, and the front entrance on Gower Street, UCL propose a consistent approach to their artwork and branding, giving students, staff, and the general public an opportunity to find out about the impact the UCL community has globally, whilst discovering more about its history and background.

Site and Surrounding Area

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The Site is located within the UCL campus and is situated on the corner of Gordon Square, with Gordon Street to the east. The Site is currently used as UCL's Student Centre which provides a variety of study spaces (Use Class F1), as well as the Student Centre Café (Use Class E(a)). It is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Although the Site itself is not listed, there are multiple listed buildings on Gordon Square, including the nearby Grade II listed 26 Gordon Street to the southeast and the Grade I listed Wilkins Building at the rear of the Site. Additionally, there is a nearby Grade II listed lamp post on the corner of Gordon Square.

The Student Centre obtained planning permission on 18 November 2015 (ref. 2015/3302/P). There is no relevant planning history since then.

Proposals

The proposals relate to the installation of a total of 11 x window vinyl advertisements displayed across the ground floor front elevation facing onto Gordon Street and 5 x window vinyl advertisements displayed across the ground floor side elevation of the UCL Student Centre.

Panels 'A' and 'C', as identified in the drawings pack, would comprise of four vinyls which would be uniform in format, displaying an image, text and QR code, relating to the University on the left and right side of the main entrance of the Student Centre. The image and text would be different for each vinyl but would be of similar scale and appearance. In addition, Panel 'B' would comprise of one vinyl displaying the UCL logo, one displaying 'University College London' and one displaying 'Student Centre, 27-28 Gordon Street' which would be situated above the main entrance of the Student Centre on Gordon Street.

In addition, there would be five vinyls situated to the left of the main entrance of the Student Centre, along the vehicle access route. These vinyls would be of similar appearance to panels 'A' and 'C' on the front elevation of the building.

All of the vinyls will be made of laminated vinyl, known as Nu Coat, and will be adhesively fixed to the windows. The vinyls will not be illuminated.

Further details of the vinyl window signs are included in the drawing pack, prepared by UCL, submitted with this application.

Planning Policy Context

Regulation 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires that local planning authorities control the display of advertisements only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

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

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority when considering proposals for development within Conservation Areas to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Statutory Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan (2021) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

The following planning policy documents are also material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)
- Camden Planning Guidance: Advertisements (2018)

Camden also published the Local Plan Review (Regulation 18 consultation) on the 17 January 2023, however, given its stage in the process, this holds limited weight.

As the proposals affect a building within a Conservation Area, consideration has been given to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy Assessment

Policy HC1 of the London Plan and Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan seek to conserve the significance of heritage assets and their surroundings.

Policy D1 of Camden's Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and requires that development respects local context and character.

Policy D4 of the Camden Local Plan requires advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building by respecting the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building and be of the highest standard of design, material and detail.

Policy D4 also states that advertisements should not contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area; contribute to street clutter in the public realm; cause light pollution to nearby residential properties or wildlife habitats; have flashing illuminated elements; or impact upon public safety.

The application proposes to install a number of external vinyls displaying an image, text and QR code, relating to the University as well as UCL branding, fixed to the windows along the front and side elevation of the Student Centre. The proposals have been sensitively designed in terms of their size and location. Consideration has also been given to their impact on the building on which they are displayed, local context, street-scene and wider townscape. The design and colouring of the lettering is minimal and is in keeping with UCL branding across the Campus. The signage is not considered to obscure or hinder the ready interpretation of any traffic, or the safety of persons using any highways.

The proposed advertisements would be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and will allow the UCL to successfully advertise the building, and their university in a discreet manner with no impact on public safety or neighbouring amenity. As a result, the proposals are in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Furthermore, the proposed signage is sensitive to the context of the building and the wider area. The proposals are therefore considered to have a neutral impact on the wider conservation area.

On the basis of the above, the proposed signage complies with Policies D1, D2 and D4 of the Local Plan, Camden Planning Guidance: Advertisements, London Plan 2021 and the NPPF 2023, and as such, express consent for the display of an advertisement should be granted accordingly.

Application Documentation

In accordance with the London Borough of Camden's validation requirements, the following documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal, alongside this cover letter:

- Application form;
- Site Location Plan; and
- Advertisement Pack, prepared by UCL.

The requisite application fee of £165 (Plus a Planning Portal admin fee of £64) has been paid online via the Planning Portal at the time of submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact Lucy Hale (4[REDACTED]) or Ben Gibbs ([REDACTED]) of this office should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to receiving notice of your receipt and validation.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Eve LLP

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