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Planning and Borough Development
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Your Ref: PP-12588797

25 March 2024

UCL Engineering Front Building, Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7JE
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 display of window vinyls on the south elevation of the UCL Engineering Front Building, Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7JE (the 'Site').

Advertisement consent is sought for the following:

"Installation of 12 x vinyls on the south elevation of the UCL Engineering Front Building fronting Torrington Place."

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 with Torrington Place to the south, Gower Street to the west and Malet Place to the east. The Site is known as the Roberts Building and is currently used as UCL's Engineering Building (Use Class F1). It is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Although the Site itself is not listed, there are multiple nearby listed buildings including the Grade II listed 33 and 35 Torrington Place to the east across Malet Place, the Grade II listed former Dillon's Bookshop on the opposite side of Torrington Place to the south and the Grade II listed 87-97 Gower Street.

There is no relevant planning history.

Proposals

The proposals relate to the installation of a total of 12 x window vinyl advertisements displayed across the ground floor south elevation of the Engineering Front Building.

Panels 'A' and 'C', as identified in the drawings pack, would comprise of x 8 vinyls which would be uniform in format, displaying an image, text and QR code, relating to the University. The image and text would be different for each vinyl but would be of similar scale and appearance.

Panels 'B' and 'D', as identified in the pack, prepared by UCL, would comprise of one vinyl displaying the UCL logo as well as 'University College London'. The vinyls on the two panels would be uniform in format, scale and appearance.

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.

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 the Camden 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 sets out that 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 width of the south elevation of the Engineering Front Building. The proposals have been sensitively designed in terms of their size and location. Consideration has also been given to their impact on the host 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 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 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 will be sensitive to the context of the building and the wider area. The proposals are therefore considered to have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of 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 ([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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