



Dear Mr. Hodgson,

I wish to lodge an objection in the strongest possible terms about two aspects of the plan to alter the Wilkins Building in UCL.

I have read the proposals and I was shocked to see that there is no mention of the presence of the UCL Art Museum, next to the main steps fronting on the quadrangle. I was Professor of the History of Art at UCL and when I came in 1990 I was also ex-officio chairman of the College Collections Committee. I was particularly excited by the College's wonderful collections mainly housed in the space, ranging from the 15th century to present day Slade students. I made it my business to bring these collections into full academic use and make them available to the wider community. We rebuilt the interior with external funds and brought it up to national security standards so we could borrow works from national museums, especially the British Museum. Two professional curators are employed, and it receives funding from government sources.

In short it is now a vibrant space, with lots of student involvement, and it also presents exhibitions based on its collections that have a considerable following outside the College, some based on the recent gift of English and French caricatures. The proposal is to put everything in store with no proposed location for its redisplay. Apart from the unspecified length of storage, a whole new space would have to be found that is highly unlikely to be as easy of access as the present room, as well as the dangers of packing them up in the first place.

The second worry is the removal of Triqueti's Marmor Homericum, a large Victorian mosaic in the South Cloister, one of the very few original adornments to the cloisters that survived the bombing in the 2nd World War. This is a precious and integral part of a Grade 1 listed interior, and has the closest possible connections to the founding of the college. It was commissioned by George Grote, one of the College founders, a liberal politician and classical scholar, and is by one of the major sculptors of the age. It would be an act of grotesque philistinism to remove it for the sake of a lift.

I am sure that it is coincidental that this proposal was rushed through during the long vacation, but it is clear that wide consultation within the College has not taken place,

Yours sincerely,

David Bindman