Design and Access Statement

UCL 200 Gordon Street - Green wall & Canopy

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Rev	Date	Description	Author
P01	09-07-2024	First issue for draft planning information.	JE
P02	16-09-2024	Updated following input from planning consultants and pre-app meeting with Camden	PS
P03	17-09-2024	Updates to proposed images.	AH

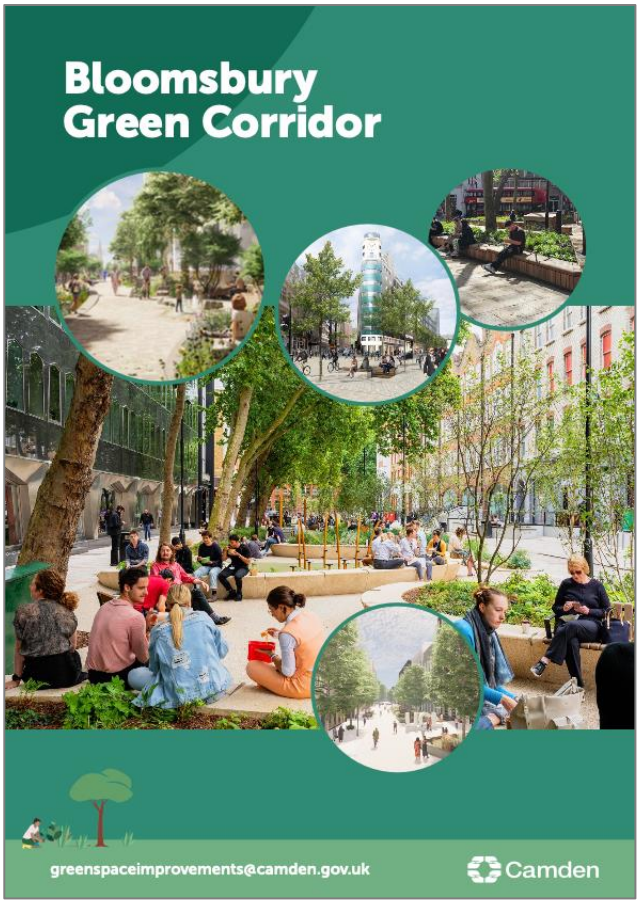
Contents

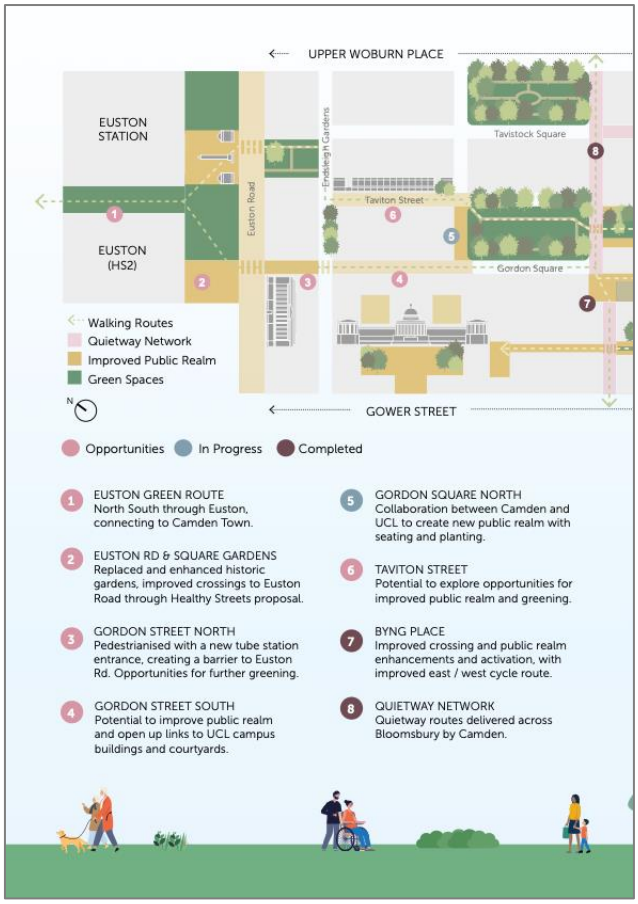
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

As part of UCL's 200th anniversary in 2026, several projects are being developed to improve the experience and accessibility of the campus's central spaces. A significant transformation is planned for the Wilkins Building Main Quad on Gower Street, and as part of a collaboration with Camden Council, the Gordon Street project "aims to transform this thoroughfare into an outdoor environment that provides spaces for students, staff, and local residents and visitors." [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2024/aug/improving-experience-and-accessibility-our-campus-central-spaces]. The transformation and greening of Gordon Street is a key aim identified within Camden's Bloomsbury Green Corridor strategy.

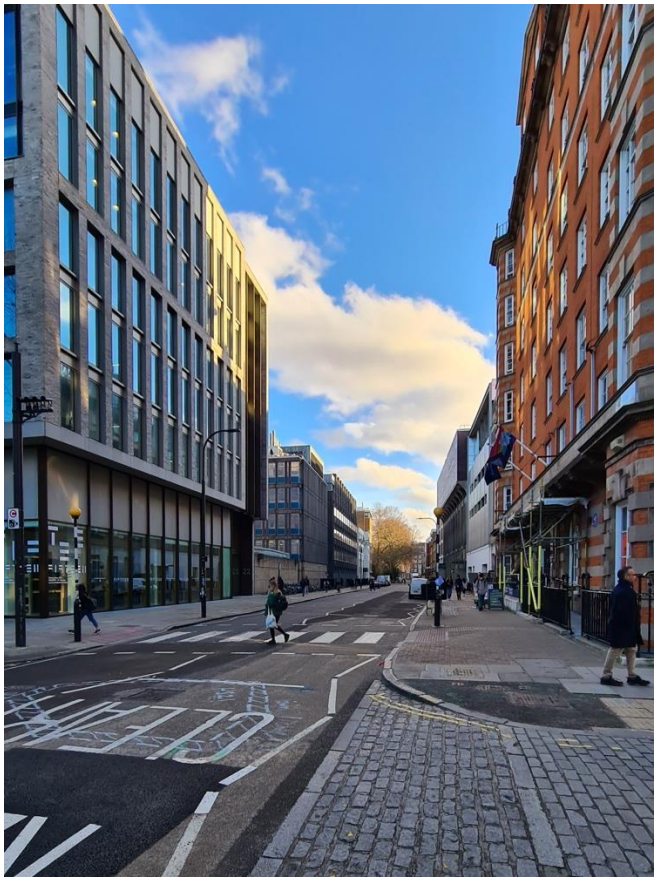
The Green Wall and Canopy described in this document is the first phase of the Gordon Street project. It proposes to bring planting, biodiversity and sustainable urban drainage to Gordon Street, contributing to an enrichment of the local environment, improving air quality and environmental health, and bringing aesthetic enhancements to the currently prevailing concrete and hard landscape context.





1.2 Context

The Green Wall and Canopy is proposed for UCL's Christopher Ingold Building (CIB). Built in the 1960s, the Christopher Ingold Building is predominantly 6 storeys (lower-ground, ground, 4 upper levels) arranged as two primary blocks either side of a recessed entrance: the southern block articulated with regular glazing framed by pre-cast concrete cladding; the northern block has a blank façade built with uninterrupted pre-cast concrete cladding panels. The Christopher Ingold Building's lecture theatre sits further north behind a single storey concrete wall with its low-pitched roof just visible above.



Above: views of the Christopher Ingold Building (CIB)

Top: view of the CIB lecture theatre wall. Above: the blank façade to the south of the lecture theatre.

1.3 Location

The Christopher Ingold Building is located on the east side of Gordon Street, in the heart of UCL's Bloomsbury Campus, just south of Euston Station. UCL own most of the buildings in the immediate surroundings. Although not listed, the building is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Site, subject of the application

Adjoining land, same owner as subject site

1.4 Planning engagement

The design strategy and proposals have been developed iteratively and collaboratively, with a series of pre-application engagement meetings with LB Camden (in particular with Edward Hodgson and Rose Todd). Comments and discussion from these meetings has fed into the emerging design strategy, and a summary of the meetings is set out below.

22 March 2024 - site visit to Gordon Street

18 April 2024 - initial meeting

Key points included:

- Presentation of initial concept idea
- Support for improving greening, biodiversity, drainage attenuation/SUDS
- Support for enhancing the pedestrian experience
- Acceptance of proposals in principle

04 July 2024 - design update meeting (cancelled)

This meeting was cancelled as it was deemed not to be required by LB Camden, following the submission of a design information pack to LB Camden showing limited change in design impact. LB Camden comments were shared and responded to by email.

20 August 2024 - design update meeting

Key points included:

- Presentation of updated design proposals
- Recognition of design evolution to accommodate 'blue-roof' attenuation, and for the canopy to protect the timber structure (hence moving away from original concept pergola idea)
- Recognition of potential educational benefit
- Continued acceptance of benefits and of the proposals in principle

Further to the meeting on 20 August, the design has developed further, with a break being introduced mid-way along the canopy, and the resulting pair of canopies being designed with different heights. This design development is shown on subsequent pages.

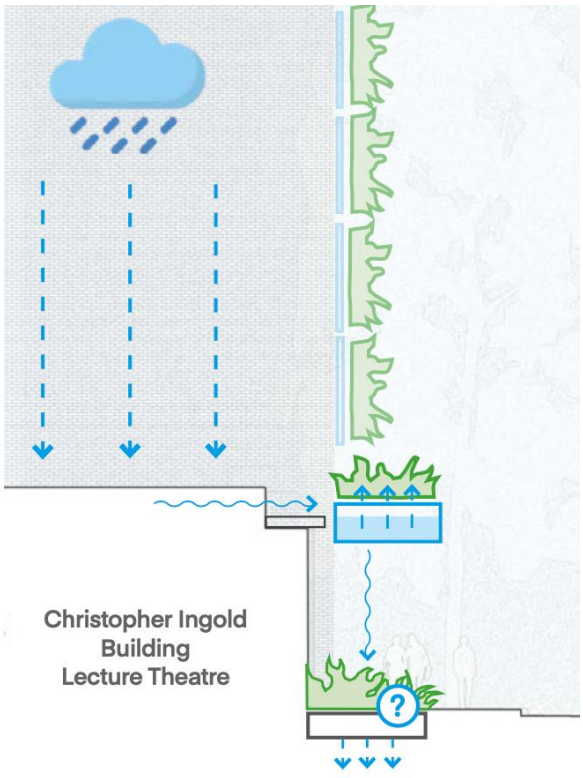
2.0 Design

2.1 Overview of project intentions, brief, scope

The project aims to install a green wall on the upper blank façade of the Christopher Ingold Building, and in addition a single-storey canopy with a timber structure which will have a green biodiverse roof and a build-up that also creates a rainwater attenuation zone (a 'blue roof'). The project aims to:

- Enhance the appearance of the building and the streetscape
- Improve greening and biodiversity within the public realm
- Attenuate rainwater and surface-water discharge to mitigate impacts of heavy rainfall events
- Provide opportunities for education and research
- Provide a better sense of scale for pedestrians at street level

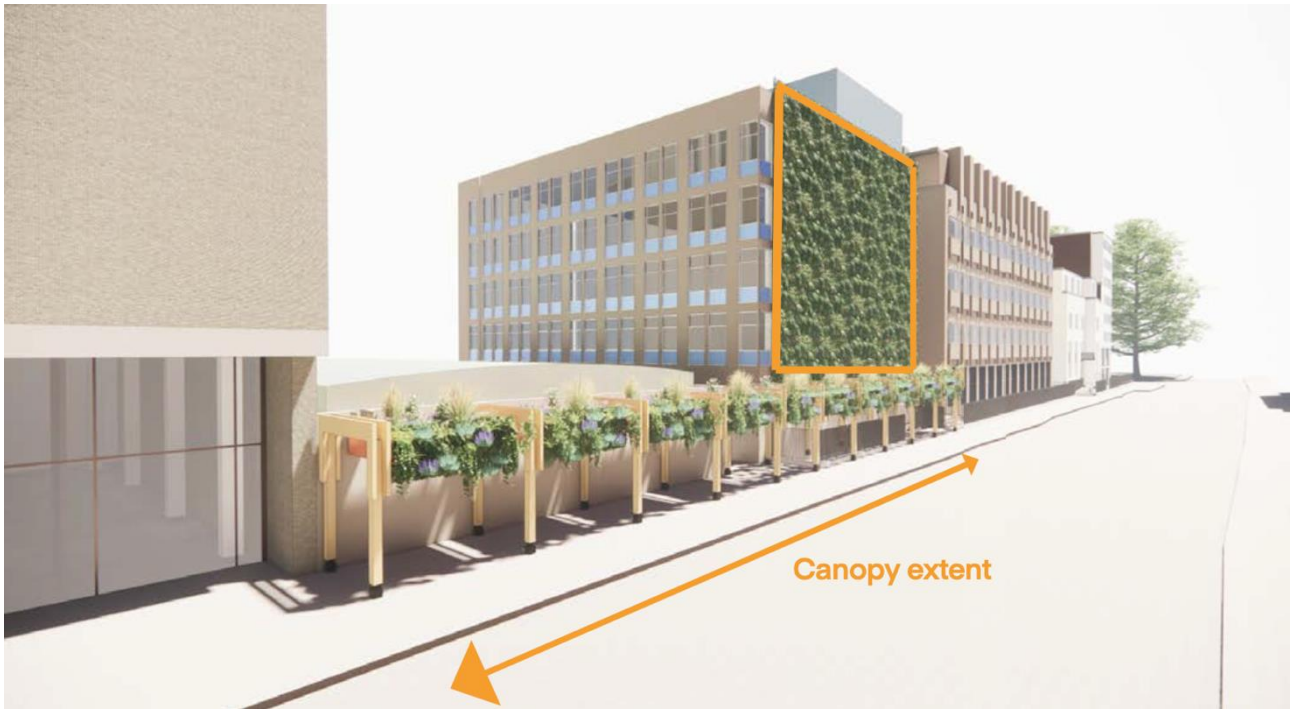
The project does not intend to alter or remove the existing cycle racks, but there is potential for these to be relocated in future as part of the wider Gordon Street transformation project which could allow a planting zone to be established helping with rainwater discharge.



Above right: concept sketch of green wall and canopy rainwater attenuation. Note, *UCL's* cycle parking currently to remain in place.

2.2 Evolution of the design

A. Original concept idea and extent



Above: visualisation showing the green wall on the CIB's blank façade, and the intended extent of canopy running beneath the green wall and along to the north in front of the lecture theatre.

B. Timber canopy structural design development

Above: *testing different strategies for the canopy's timber* structure, which will be designed to have a continuous deck above to protect the timber structure and to support the green and blue roof above.

C. Timber canopy structural design development

Above: development of the canopy design to respond to the context of the existing building, separating the canopy into two and adjusting the height of each part, the first canopy responding to the lower height and scale of the lecture theatre*'s single storey* wall, the second canopy being raised up and *longer, corresponding to the larger scale of the CIB's blank façade.*

2.3 Materiality

The canopy structure will be predominantly timber with some visible steel connections at the foot and head of the columns, and where the beams are fixed back to the building. The soffit and fascia panels of the canopy will be clad with anodised metal panelling.

2.4 Planting, rainwater attenuation and sustainable drainage strategy

The canopies will have planted roofs designed to capture rainwater through a 'blue roof' attenuation system. This will act to hold rainwater so that it can provide an irrigation source for the roof planting and slow the rainwater discharge into the surface-water drainage system particularly during storm events.

Irrigation equipment is also required to sustain the green wall and canopy planting, particularly during dry spells. This equipment will be installed within the basement of the existing building.

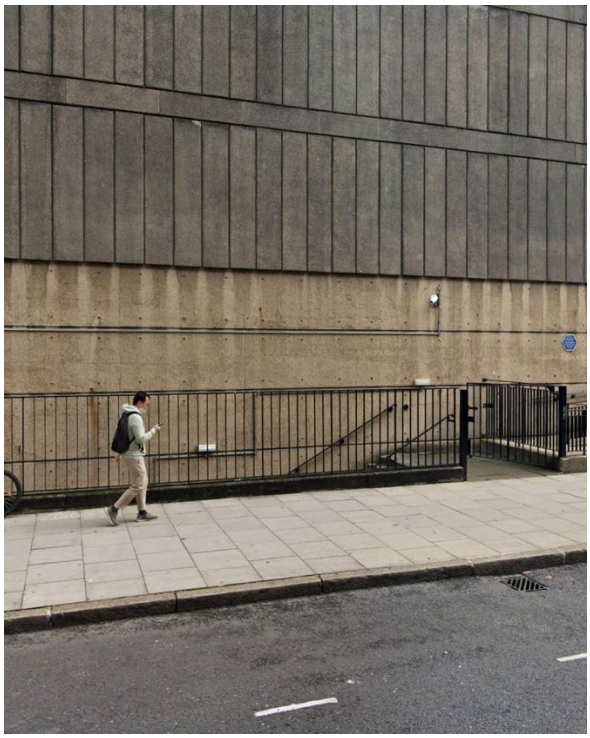
The planting is intended to comprise only of species native to the UK, with for example native ferns and some grasses for year-round interest and a number of wildflowers flowering from spring to autumn.

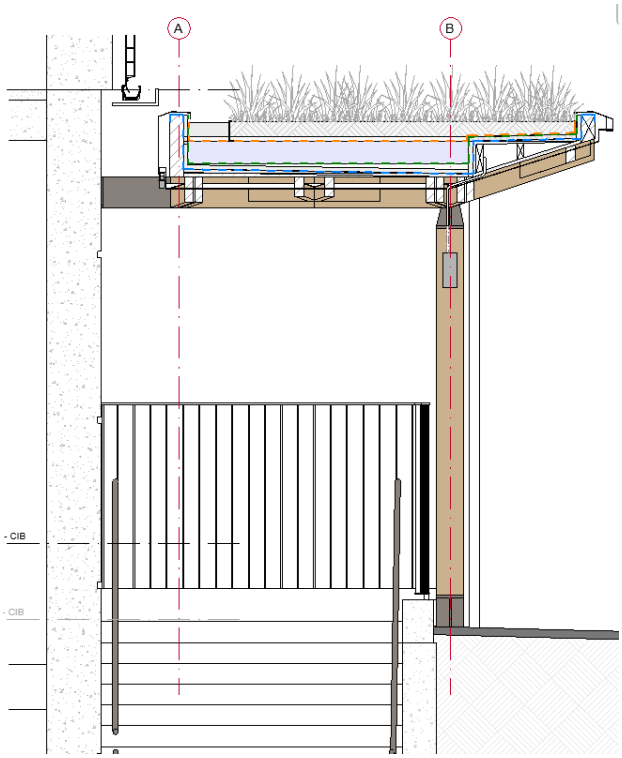
2.5 Maintenance

It is anticipated that a maintenance contract will be put in place to ensure the necessary regular pattern of maintenance is kept up. This will include maintenance to the planting on the canopy and green wall, as well as maintenance of the irrigation system, and the canopy's drainage outlets for example. It is anticipated that maintenance will be carried out by using a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP).

2.6 Impact on existing streetscape

The canopy will be supported by a line of columns running at the back of the pavement line. The position of the columns is driven by the need to avoid encroaching on the railings surrounding the escape stair that rises from basement level. The front of the canopy extends a small distance beyond the columns, *as illustrated in the section drawing below:*





2.7 Image of the proposed scheme

2.8 Lighting

The lighting strategy aims to integrate with the canopy to emphasise the architectural qualities of the canopy's design. Wall-washing and lighting to the columns will create visual interest as well as aid safety and wayfinding. Focussed illumination with minimal light spill from uplighters on the canopy will give some highlight to the green wall, and lighting controls will allow for periods of darkness, enabling the plants on the green wall and canopy roof to experience a natural cycle. Refer to the Lighting Assessment for more information.

3.0 Access and transport

3.1 Summary

The scheme does not seek to change the means of access in and around the Christopher Ingold Building, or the transport arrangements on Gordon Street. The current cycle parking provision is intended to remain and improvements, or amendments to the cycle parking, including its potential relocation to allow for further planting beneath one of the canopies, will be considered as part of the wider Gordon Street transformation project.