



GERALDEVE
A NEWMARK COMPANY

One Fitzroy 6 Mortimer Street
London W1T 3JJ
Tel. +44 (0)20 7493 3338
geraldve.com

London Borough of Camden
Planning and Borough Development
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

FAO: Edward Hodgson

01 October 2024

Our ref: LEO/SNE/AME/ U0025656

Your ref: PP-13054815

Dear Sir,

Christopher Ingold Building, Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0AY
Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) 1990
Application for Full Planning Permission

We write on behalf of our client, University College London ('UCL') (the 'Applicant') to submit a planning application for full planning permission for the installation of a Green Wall and Canopy on the Christopher Ingold Building, Gordon Street, London, WC1H 0AY (the 'Site').

Full planning permission is sought for the following:

"Installation of a Green Wall on the façade of the Christopher Ingold Building, installation of a single-storey canopy with a green roof and associated works".

Introduction to Bicentennial Works

The proposals have been brought forward by UCL as part of their bicentennial celebrations in 2026. To mark this occasion, UCL have identified a number of improvement and refurbishment works and building legacy projects to undertake and complete by the bicentenary year. These projects include the remodelling of the Main Quad, refurbishment of the Wilkins Building Cloisters and adjacent rooms, and pedestrianisation of Gordon Street.

As part of the pre-application process, detailed pre-application discussions have been had with the London Borough of Camden's planning, design and conservation team. Stakeholders such as the Bloomsbury Association and Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee ('BCAAC') have been reached out to and will continue to be during the determination of the application.

Any feedback received during the pre-application stage has been considered and incorporated into the proposals where possible.

This application is relating to the Green Wall and Canopy at the Christopher Ingold Building only. The pedestrianisation works are being dealt with separately in conjunction with Camden highways. The Gordon Street project extends from the Endsleigh Gardens/Gower Place junction south to Gordon Square. The transformation of Gordon Street has been identified as a key aim within Camden's Bloomsbury Green Corridor Strategy. UCL's aspiration is to enhance and enliven the streetscape and provide outdoor amenity

space for socialising, creating the opportunity for events to celebrate the Bicentennial. The works to Gordon Street include the installation of a Green Wall and Canopy on the Christopher Ingold Building, banners and signage to commemorate the Bicentennial, and the installation of parklets on each side of the highway.

Site and Background

Gordon Street is located within the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Camden ('LBC') and is bounded by Gordon Square to the South, and Gower Place to the North. Surrounding buildings are predominantly educational and form part of the wider UCL campus, including the, Christopher Ingold Building, the UCL Student Centre, and the London Centre for Nanotechnology, among others.

The Site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the site does not comprise of any listed buildings, and the closest listed building to the site is number 16-25 Gordon Square (Grade II Listed) and is located 150m from the site.

The Site has 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 a number of bus routes serving the area.

Relevant 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 below:

On 03 July 2020, planning permission was granted (2020/2957/P) for:

"Erection of an external staircase at roof level (levels 4-6) and the creation of an external door on level 6."

On 05 December 2009, planning permission was granted (2009/5594/P):

"Erection of single storey entrance lobby extension to university building (Class D1)"

On 22 July 2008, planning permission was granted (2008/2495/P):

"Removal of fume cupboard roof mounted fan and vertical flue stack including ductwork from second floor and installation of new roof mounted plant, hand-rail on external gable wall and supporting structure"

On 11 October 2006, planning permission was granted (2006/4613/P):

"The installation of four windows at lower ground floor level Gordon Street elevation to replace existing"

On 23 May 2005, planning permission was granted (2005/1796/P):

"The replacement of the front entrance doors and canopy".

On 11 August 1993, planning permission was granted (9301009) for:

“Alterations to elevations on the North-East corner of the building comprising the replacement of the existing cladding material by metal cladding and brickwork”

On 29 June 1993, planning permission was granted (9300784) for:

“Erection of a single storey storage building at basement level to the Taviton Stret frontage”.

As highlighted above, extensive alterations have occurred at the site over the years.

The Proposal

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2006 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan comprises:

- The London Plan (2021)
- The Camden Local Plan (2017)

Camden also has a number of adopted Planning Guidance documents which would be a material consideration. The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is also a material consideration.

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 Assessment

Design

Policy D1 of Camden’s Local Plan states that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and will require that development proposals respect the local character and context and are inclusive and accessible for all.

A Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Nicholas Hare Architects and is submitted as part of this application for the Council’s considerations. The Design and Access Statement has been prepared to supplement the supporting drawings and plans and should be read alongside the other supporting documents.

The design has been discussed at pre-application stage with Camden officers and other stakeholders. Feedback during the pre-application process has been carefully considered, and where possible, has been incorporated into the proposals.

The proposal includes the installation of a green wall on the 5 storey west-facing blank façade of the Christopher Ingold Building, as well as a wooden canopy, with the inclusion of planting, running along

Gordon Street partly in front of the Christopher Ingold Building. The Green Wall and Canopy will be developed using high-quality materials and will create an aesthetic enhancement to the building. The proposal also aligns with Camden's Bloomsbury Green Corridor Initiative, which aims to enrich the streetscape.

Overall, the proposal will have a positive impact on the aesthetic of the Christopher Ingold Building, and an improvement on the existing streetscape. As such, the proposal complies with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage

Policy HC1 of the London Plan states that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to the asset's significance and appreciation within their surroundings. Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that the Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and requires that development respects local context and character.

Policy D2 of the Local Plan establishes that the Council will seek to preserve and where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits.

The proposals relate to the installation of a Green Wall and Canopy at the Christopher Ingold Building, which is not listed but falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The proposals will provide a significant enhancement to the conservation area compared to the existing streetscape and the Green Wall and Canopy will contribute to improving the appearance of the Conservation Area, and the appearance of the Christopher Ingold Building.

The listed buildings (26 Gordon Square and 16-25 Gordon Square) to the south of Gordon Street will not be affected by the proposals. The scheme will enhance the aesthetic value of the conservation area and will not harm the significance of the Grade II listed buildings to the south of Gordon Street.

Therefore, the proposals accord with Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposals are considered to preserve and enhance the appearance and character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and therefore complies with Policies D1, D2 of Camden's Local Plan, and H1 of the London Plan.

Biodiversity

Policy G5 of the London Plan states that development proposals should contribute to the greening of London by including urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, and by incorporating measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green walls and nature-based sustainable drainage.

Policy G6 of the London Plan seeks to ensure that development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain.

Policy A3 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will protect and enhances sites of nature conservation and biodiversity. The Council will also seek to resist the loss of trees and vegetation of significant amenity or ecological value.

SuDS are proposed to be installed as part of Green Wall and Canopy. Water will be collected from the Christopher Ingold Building roof and will be stored in attenuation tanks. Greening opportunities will be irrigated from the stored rainwater, which will percolate into belowground systems.

The canopy will have a planted roof designed to capture rainwater, acting as an irrigation source for the roof planting and attenuating rainwater to alleviate discharge into the mains systems during storm events.

The Green Wall is to be planted with native, biodiversity enriching species. The greening and biodiversity gains enabled by this project should provide significant communal and public benefit and contribute to the enhancement of the public realm.

An Ecological Impact Assessment (including Biodiversity Net-Gain Assessment) has been prepared by Tyler Grange and is submitted as part of this application for the Council's consideration. The assessment sets out that the proposals will result in a net gain for biodiversity due to the installation of the green wall, and notes that the proposed development falls under the biodiversity net gain exemption.

It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with policies G5, G6 of the London Plan, and Policy A3 of Camden's Local Plan.

Transport

Policy T5 (Cycling) of the London Plan seeks to ensure that development proposals should remove barriers to cycling and create a healthy environment in which people opt to cycle. In order to ensure this is achieved development proposals should secure the provision of appropriate level of cycle parking (as set out in Table 10.2) which should be fit for purpose, secure and well located.

Local Plan Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) seeks to promote sustainable transport modes in the borough. In particular, in relation to cycling the policy seeks to ensure that development provides for accessible, secure cycle parking facilities. As a minimum the Council will expect developments to provide, the number of spaces set out in the London Plan.

The cycle parking currently installed in front of the Christopher Ingold Building, will be retained for the bicentennial as part of the wider campus cycle parking strategy and wider Highways works to Gordon Street. The existing cycle space will not be impacted by the proposals. The proposed canopy will run above a row of existing cycle parking, an escape route from the building at ground floor, a lower ground floor escape route with a set of steps that come up to pavement level, and a ramp that provides an accessible route to the building's front door. The proposal will improve the existing cycle spaces by providing sheltering to the existing cycle spaces.

The canopy structure will not interfere with or impact on these existing conditions, and will in fact, bring the added benefit of providing sheltering protection to the cycle racks in their existing locations. Furthermore, the proposals do not meet policy requirements that would require the assessment of additional cycle parking spaces, however consideration to additional parking is being accounted for in the wider pedestrianisation proposals, not forming part of this application. Importantly, the proposal maintains the existing cycle spaces and will provide sheltering through the canopy structure. and therefore, the proposals comply with Policy T5 of the London plan, and Policy T1 of the Camden Local Plan.

Lighting

Paragraph 191 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely cumulative effects. In doing so, the NPPF requires that the impact of light pollution from artificial light is limited for local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Policy D8 of the London Plan states that lighting, should be carefully considered and well-designed in order to minimise intrusive lighting infrastructure and reduce light pollution.

Policy A1 of Camden's Local Plan states that the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours and will grant permission for development unless it causes unacceptable harm to amenity. The Council will consider a number of factors, including artificial lighting levels.

Paragraph 6.7 of Camden's Local Plan states that developments in sensitive areas should employ a specialist lighting engineer (accredited by the Institute of Lighting Engineers) to ensure that artificial lighting causes minimal disturbance to occupiers.

A Lighting Assessment has been prepared by BDP, and is submitted as part of this application for the Council's consideration. The main aim of the lighting proposal is to provide adjustable spotlights to illuminate the green wall, and create an uplighting effect on the canopy and provide lighting for the cycle spaces.

In accordance with policy, the light intensity and distribution has been carefully considered to ensure that light spill is minimised, and that light distribution from luminaries do not result in adverse light trespass into neighbouring buildings.

The proposed development has carefully considered the potential impact of lighting and has sought to protect the quality of life of occupier and neighbours where possible. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with policy D8 of the London Plan, policy A1 of Camden's Local Plan and the relevant guidance set out in Camden's Amenity CPG.

Conclusion

The Gordon Street proposals are part of UCL's wider improvement and refurbishment works for the UCL campus to celebrate the bicentenary year. Works to the Main Quadrangle and Wilkins Building are proposed separately, and form part of UCL's proposals to improve the educational space, and better reflect the university's world class status as a leading global university.

The application is being brought forward following detailed pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Camden.

The proposed development comprises works to the Christopher Ingold Building, introducing a green wall and canopy, which would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant provisions set out in Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Policy Framework, London Plan and Camden's Local Plan. On this basis, it is considered that full planning permission should be granted accordingly without delay.

Application Documents

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

- Completed application form, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- CIL Form, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Covering Letter, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Nicholas Hare Architects;
- Existing and proposed Plans and Elevations, prepared by Nicholas Hare Architects;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, prepared by Tyler Grange;
- Lighting Assessment, prepared by BDP; and
- Drainage Note, prepared by BDP

The application fee of £648 (Including a Planning Portal admin fee of £70.00) has been paid online via the Planning Portal at the time of submission.

We trust that you have all the necessary information to validate this application, and we look forward to confirmation of this shortly. If you have any queries, please contact Sam Neal [REDACTED] or Abdul Mehdi [REDACTED] of this office.

Yours faithfully,

Gerald Eve LLP

Gerald Eve LLP
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