

REF: R01020/MR/AP/KDM

Planning Department
London Brough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
Kings Cross
London
N1C 4AG

11 October 2024

Dear Planning,

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RE-CLADDING AND FAÇADE REMEDIATION WORKS
MARY BRANCKER HOUSE, 54-74 HOLMES ROAD, LONDON, NW5 3AQ.**

I write on behalf of our client, Unite Students (the Applicant), to submit a planning application for recladding and façade remediation works at Mary Brancker House, 54-74 Holmes Road, London, NW5 3AQ (the Site).

Background to Planning Application

Mary Brancker House is located in Kentish Town, London, between Holmes Road and Regis Road. The building, constructed in the mid-2000s, is a part 4/5/6 storey structure, providing student accommodation for 182 residents. The ground floor is used for business purposes, with student accommodation on the upper floors. The site is not within a conservation area, but the Inkerman Conservation Area is approximately 200m to the southwest.

The building façade comprises an insulated render system with face blockwork at ground floor level. The main entrance is accessed from Holmes Road, and the building includes a central courtyard at first-floor level. The site benefits from good public transport links, offering easy access to Central London and surrounding areas.

The building façade is mainly in an insulated render system with face blockwork to some areas at ground floor level.

Relevant planning history is as follows:

LPA ref. 2003/1212/P – Planning permission was granted on 23rd November 2004 for *“Demolition of existing building and erection of new 5 and part 6 storey building comprising Class B1 business use at ground level, with 4 studios and 27 cluster flats for students above.”*

LPA ref. 2007/2883/A – Advertisement consent was granted on 29th August 2007 for *“Display of internally illuminated projecting box sign to ground floor front elevation of office (B1).”*

LPA ref. 2018/1983/P – Planning permission was granted on 6th July 2018 for *“Alterations to front entrance; Erection of walkway canopy at first floor level; Installation of external air source heat pump plant at ground floor side.”*

LPA ref. 2018/3669/A – Advertisement consent was granted on 13th November 2018 for *“Display of 1 x non-illuminated lettering logo sign above ground floor level and an internally illuminated lettering board sign by ground floor entrance facing Holmes Road.”*

Proposed façade works are required in order to remove non-compliant material from the building envelope to improve the fire safety of the building, and to improve upon the aesthetic appeal of the Site.

Pre-Application Advice

As part of the planning process for the proposed works at Mary Brancker House, a comprehensive pre-application process was undertaken with Camden Council to seek guidance on the scheme. A pre-application request was submitted on 24th June 2024, outlining the proposed recladding and façade remediation works. The key objectives of the proposal were to enhance fire safety, modernise the building's appearance, and ensure compliance with local planning policies.

Throughout the process, several rounds of feedback were received from Camden's Principal Planning Officer, Christopher Smith. This iterative engagement allowed for a thorough refinement of the proposals in response to the Council's recommendations. The initial feedback, provided in August 2024, highlighted concerns regarding material selection, with a strong emphasis on avoiding aluminium panels due to their high embodied carbon. Camden Council recommended considering brick slips as a more sustainable option where structurally feasible, while suggesting that existing render be retained in areas where structural limitations would make removal impractical.

Subsequent feedback from the Council included detailed advice on improving the building's integration with its surrounding context and aligning with the emerging masterplan development in the area. The Council expressed a preference for the use of brick slips to better reflect the local character and ensure the façade enhancements were in keeping with the surrounding buildings.

On 9th October 2024, revised proposals were submitted to the Council, incorporating the Council's suggestions. The updated scheme included retaining the existing masonry blockwork and introducing a new A-rated mineral wool insulated render system to improve fire safety and thermal performance. The proposal also incorporated the use of brick slip cladding on certain elevations to meet both sustainability and design goals.

In the final round of feedback, Camden Council indicated that the revised proposals were promising and largely consistent with the earlier advice provided. While final sign-off was pending a review by the design officer, the Council encouraged submission of the formal planning application, expressing general support for the direction of the project.

Proposed Works

The application seeks planning permission for:

“Recladding and façade remediation works.”

It is proposed that areas of non-compliant material on the Mary Brancker House are to be replaced with materials that are classified as compliant A rated products. The main objective is to fully remove and replace the existing insulated render system that is currently in place on the building. Upon reinstatement of new materials, appropriate cavity barriers will also be installed to provide compartmentation on building.

1. Brick Slip Cladding:

- The building will feature a new brick slip cladding system in selected areas to enhance the building's visual appeal and sustainability performance.
- Ibstock Mechslip brick slips will be used, with two colour options:
 - Golden Purple for certain elevations, as noted on the front and side elevations.
 - Ebony Black for other areas of the building, including rear and side elevations.

2. Retained Blockwork:

- The existing masonry blockwork at the ground floor level will be retained and redecorated where necessary. This applies to all façades, helping to maintain the structural integrity and existing character.

3. Silicone Render System:

- The render will be in Stone Grey/Graphite, offering a sleek, modern finish that aligns with the adjacent building materials.

4. Windows and Parapets:

- Existing window units will be retained, with any necessary redecoration to ensure consistency in appearance. Window frames and glazing will remain in place, contributing to the overall

sustainability by minimising material waste.

- Parapet cappings and other aluminium trims, including feature channels and flashings, will be made from pressed aluminium profiles, offering durability and visual cohesion across the elevations.

5. Additional Features:

- Re-decoration of the existing doors and vents on the ground floor will be undertaken to match the new façade treatments.
- Some soffit areas will be removed, and blockwork will be continued to match the existing style and aesthetic of the building.

This development proposal seeks to enhance the safety, sustainability, and appearance of Mary Brancker House, while retaining key structural elements to minimise disruption and align with local planning policies.

Planning Policy Context

The statutory development plan for the application Site consists of the Camden Local Plan (2017). Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the London Plan (2021) and relevant supplementary planning documents, Camden Planning Guidance (2021) documents – Amenity, Design, Housing, Home Improvements, Transport, Employment Sites and Business Premises.

Camden Council are currently consulting on their Regulation 18 Draft New Local Plan. This is the first full consultation stage of the Plan, and the consultation ran until 5pm on 13th March 2024. Following this there will be one further Regulation 19 (publication) stage consultation, with the Plan then being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. At this time, the emerging policies carry very little weight in the determination of planning applications.

Planning Considerations

In line with Local Plan Policy A1 (Managing the Impact of Development), the proposals address this by enhancing the building's appearance without adversely affecting visual privacy or outlook for surrounding properties. By maintaining the existing height and structure of the building, the development avoids creating issues such as overshadowing or a reduction in daylight for nearby occupants. The use of high-quality brick slips and silicone render enhances the building's aesthetic while preserving the integrity of the existing structure.

In line with Policy D1 (Design), the proposals for Mary Brancker House adhere to this policy through the use of materials that complement the local architectural style of Kentish Town. The selected brick slip

cladding, alongside the silicone render system in Stone Grey/Graphite, ensures that the building integrates seamlessly into its surroundings while enhancing its overall appearance. By retaining the existing masonry blockwork at ground level, the development maintains the building's structural integrity and reinforces its relationship with the surrounding streetscape.

Sustainability is a key component of the proposals. This is further addressed within the Sustainable Design and Construction Statement prepared by ROK Planning. The introduction of A-rated mineral wool insulation significantly improves the building's thermal performance, contributing to Camden's climate change mitigation goals. In addition to being sustainable, the materials used are highly durable, ensuring that the building remains both functional and visually appealing in the long term. The proposals also integrate well with the surrounding streets, enhancing the street frontage and creating a more engaging presence along Holmes Road and Regis Road.

The design is not only functional but also visually cohesive, contributing positively to the local area. Additionally, the proposals respect the natural features of the site by maintaining the existing footprint and avoiding encroachment on open spaces or key views.

The high-quality of the proposed work's materials and the careful consideration given to the site's context is also deemed to be in line with Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023).

Overall, it is important to note that the proposed recladding will improve upon the aesthetic and functional qualities of the site and thus, we believe planning permission should be granted.

Contents of the Application

The following supporting documents have been submitted via planning portal in support of this application:

- Completed application forms;
- The relevant planning application fee;
- This Covering Letter prepared by ROK Planning;
- Fire Statement prepared by Design Fire Consultants;
- Design and Access Statement prepared by AXIOM Architects; and
- The following drawings prepared by AXIOM Architects;
 - Block and Site Location Plan (DN: 6233-P90)
 - Existing Elevations Sh1 (DN: 6233-P100)
 - Existing Elevations Sh2 (DN: 6233-P101)
 - Proposed Elevations Sh1 (DN: 6233-P104b)
 - Proposed Elevations Sh2 (DN: 6233-P105b)

I look forward to your formal acknowledgement of this pre-application submission. If you have any

ROK PLANNING

ROK Planning Ltd
51-52 St. John's Square
London
EC1V 4JL

queries, please do not hesitate to contact either Aidan Payne (aidan.payne@rokplanning.co.uk) or myself at this office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Roe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Roe

Director

ROK Planning

T: 0773 0064234

E: matthew.roe@rokplanning.co.uk