

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

FAO: Edward Hodgson

Our ref: LOL/ALA/ASI/U0029150

Your ref: PP-13699899

19 March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

UCL Anatomy and Medical Sciences Building, 100 Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application for Full Planning Permission

We write on behalf of our client, University College London ('UCL') (the 'Applicant') to submit an application for full planning permission to install new condenser units at UCL Anatomy and Medical Sciences Building, 100 Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT (the 'Site').

Planning permission is sought for the following:

"Removal of four condenser units and a single compressor unit, and installation of five new condenser units at fourth floor level, and associated works."

Site and Background

This application relates to the Anatomy and Medical Sciences Building which is currently occupied for educational purposes. The Site is located on the east side of Gower Street, with Malet Place to the east and Torrington Place to the South. The building is not statutory listed, but it is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The surrounding buildings are predominantly educational use and form part of the wider UCL campus, including the Grade II Listed Rockefeller building, located on the adjacent side of Gower Street. There are also clusters of residential uses nearby.

The Site has a 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

A planning history search has been undertaken using Camden's online planning register to establish the planning history record for the Site. A summary of the relevant planning history has been set out below.

On 25 May 2023, an application for full planning permission was granted under application ref. 2023/1531/P for the following:

"Replacement of existing air intake and outlet ducts with new extract grille and extract duct to the rear of the building, and installation of a new louvred aluminium door to chemical store."

On 9 February 2017, an application for full planning permission was granted under application ref. 2016/6452/P for the following:

"Replacement and installation of new plant equipment at roof level and within the lightwell fronting Gower Street."

On 19 August 2013, an application for full planning permission was granted under application ref. 2013/4058/P for the following:

"Installation of plant deck and screen to rear elevation of Anatomy Building (Class D1)."

On 20 September 2012, an application for full planning permission was granted under application ref. 2012/3955/P for the following:

"Enlargement of two existing windows at basement level of the Medical Sciences Building (Class D1)."

The Proposal

To support the wider refurbishment of the fourth-floor laboratories, it is proposed to replace four fan coil condenser units and a single compressor unit located at roof level, with five modern replacement units (four roof mounted and one wall mounted). In addition, it is proposed to rationalise the existing supply and return pipework to provide a neater installation.

For context, please note that eight condenser units were previously removed from this area (behind the covered balcony area facing Gower Street) as part of the enabling strip out works.

The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that the existing laboratories maintain their internal environment, as well as ensure the efficient operation and longevity of the plant.

The proposed works are set out in further detail in the supporting plans, drawings, and the design and access statement prepared by GPM2. These documents have been submitted as part of this application for the Council's consideration.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations

indicated otherwise. Accordingly, the proposals are assessed against the policies of the London Plan (adopted 2021) and Camden's Local Plan (adopted 2017).

Whilst not forming part of the Statutory Development Plan, the following documents remain important material considerations.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024);
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (as amended); and
- London Borough of Camden's Supplementary Planning Documents.

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 Policy Assessment

Design and Heritage

Policy D1 of Camden's 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 D2 of Camden's Local Plan sets out 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.

It is proposed to replace four fan coil condenser units and a single compressor unit located at roof level, with five modern replacement units (four roof mounted and one wall mounted). In addition, it is proposed to rationalise the existing supply and return pipework to provide a neater installation.

For context, there were previously eight condenser units behind the covered balcony area which were removed between January – July 2024 as part of the enabling / strip works, leaving five units in situ. The five remaining units are proposed to be removed and replaced as part of this application.

The rationalisation of the proposed plant will improve the existing situation on site, respect the local context and character of the area, and will be set back to reduce visual impact. The condenser units will not be visible at street level.

In addition, it is considered that the removal and replacement of the condenser units will preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Overall, it is considered that the proposals, by virtue of their limited scale, would preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and will not impact the significance of nearby listed buildings. It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with Policies D1 and D2 of Camden's Local Plan.

Enhancing Community Facilities

Policy C2 of Camden's Local Plan states that Camden will support the investment plans of educational, health, scientific and research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden, London and the UK.

The proposed condenser units will support the existing laboratory space and will assist in providing upgraded facilities that are fit for purpose and meet the current needs of students and staff members of the University.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed condenser units will enhance the existing educational use and would therefore accord with Policy C2 of Camden's Local Plan.

Noise, Vibration and Overheating

Noise and vibration

Policy A1 of Camden's Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that the quality-of-life occupiers and neighbours are protected from the impact of development. The relevant factors considered include noise and vibration levels, and odour, fumes, and dust.

Policy A4 of Camden's Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed. The Council state that permission will only be granted for noise generating development, including any plant and machinery, where it can be operated without causing harm to amenity.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by the Environmental Equipment Corporation (EEC) and is submitted as part of this application for the Council's consideration. The Noise Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential noise impact of the proposed condenser units on the closest residential receptor which is identified as Arthur Tattersall House student accommodation. The assessment concludes that the noise criterion is met at all assessment locations during all periods of the proposed condenser unit's operation. Moreover, the assessment concludes that the predicted noise levels would be below a level at which no effects are observed to occur (10 dB).

Overall, it is considered that that noise will not pose a material constraint to the operation of the proposed condenser units and would therefore accord with Policies A1 and A4 of Camden's Local Plan.

Overheating

Policy CC2 of Camden's Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to ensure that development is resilient to climate change. The Council states that all development should adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures such as measures to reduce the impact of overheating, including application of the cooling hierarchy.

Active cooling has historically existed within the building and the proposal seeks to retain this through implementing more efficient measures. There is an extensive planning history for the existing plant and machinery at the site which is set out above. It is understood that the condenser units being replaced as part of this proposal have been installed for more than ten years and serve the existing laboratory space. Given the period of time that the condenser units have been installed, should it not benefit from a specific planning permission, it would now be considered as lawful development.

The new condenser units are considered to be more efficient and will replace the existing condenser units which are either redundant or inefficient. Please note, the proposal will not be increasing the level of active cooling within the building and will only replace the existing active cooling.

With the above in mind, an Overheating Assessment has not been undertaken as the cooling capacity is not being increased as part of the proposal. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policy CC2 of Camden's Local Plan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policies D1, D2, C2, A1, A4 and CC2 of Camden's Local Plan, and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed works will also preserve the character and appearance of the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area. We therefore consider that the proposal accords with the Development Plan and should therefore be determined positively without delay.

Application documentation

In accordance with the London Borough of Camden's validation requirements, the following documents have been submitted in support of this application:

- Application form, prepared by Newmark;
- Covering Letter, prepared by Newmark;
- CIL Additional Information form, prepared by Newmark;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by GPM2;
- Existing and Proposed Plans and Drawings, prepared by GPM2;
- Design and Access Statement including Plant Specification Sheet and Photographs, prepared by GPM2; and
- Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Environmental Equipment Corporation (EEC).

The requisite application fee of £578.00 (Plus a Planning Portal admin fee of £70.00) has been paid online via the Planning Portal (PP-13699899) at the time of submission.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of registration and validation of the application shortly. If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Arjun Lal [REDACTED] or Aadam Siddiqui ([REDACTED]) of this office.

Yours faithfully

Newmark

Aadam Siddiqui
Planning Consultant

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