

London Borough of Camden
Planning and Borough Development
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Our ref: PIR/ADKS/U0029583
Your Ref: PP-13933830

23 May 2025

UCL DMS Watson Building Malet Place 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 for the replacement of the roof mounted chiller at UCL DMS Watson Building, Malet Place London, WC1E (the 'Site').

Planning permission is sought for the following:

"Removal of existing roof mounted chiller unit, and replacement with new unit"

Site and Background

The DMS Watson building was constructed c.1970 and comprises a six-storey block with an attic. The DMS Watson is a part of the UCL campus and encompasses a science library space for UCL on all floors. There is access via Malet Place via Torrington Place.

The Site is located within Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Surrounding buildings are predominantly educational and form part of the wider UCL campus, including the Grade I listed University College (University of London) and attached railings to north and south wing, to the north and the Grade II Listed Cruciform building, located on the adjacent side of Gower Street. There are also some clusters of residential uses.

The Site has a PTAL rating of 6b (the best rating) 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 planning register to establish the planning record for the Site. A summary of the relevant planning history has been set out below.

On 14 July 2015 planning permission (ref. 2015/2975/P) was granted for the **"Installation of plant (air handling unit, condenser and ductwork) at 5th floor roof level"**.

On 4 February 2004 planning permission (ref. 2003/2055/P) was granted for **"The installation of two air blast coolers on the roof of the DMS Watson Building."**

On 28 August 2001 planning permission (ref. PSX0104970) was granted for **"The provision of two fire exits and stairs from ground floor mezzanine level to the rear of the building (west elevation)."**

The Proposal

UCL seek to ensure that the DMS Watson Building remains a high-quality science building for students and staff. The existing external chiller is proving to be inadequate and has surpassed its serviceable life. The replacement of the plant is therefore required.

The proposed works seek the replacement of the existing chiller unit, at roof level, with a like for like unit in the same location, and of the same proportions. New pipework and cabling will follow the route of the existing redundant chiller into the building via the external elevation.

Given the size and location of the proposed plant, it would not be visible from the street scene.

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);
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (as amended); and
- London Borough of Camden's Supplementary Planning Documents.

Camden is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which aims to set out the Council's vision for future development in Camden for the next 15 years. The draft Local Plan was subject to a Regulation 18 consultation in early 2024. Consultation on the Regulation 19 draft is currently underway and will end on the 27 June 2025. Due to the status of draft Local Plan at this stage, limited weight is given to the draft policies when assessing the proposals.

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. As the proposals affect a building within a

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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 proposed chiller is required to support the overall function of the building, and to ensure that the DMS Watson Building operates as a high-quality science building for all students and staff

The proposed chiller will replace an existing efficient unit of the same proportions. As the chiller will be located at roof level, it will not be visible from public viewpoints (as is the case with the existing unit) and will therefore not have a negative visual impact on the Site and its wider setting.

The proposals are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and is in accordance with relevant sections of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Amenity

Policy A1 (Managing the Impacts of Development) seeks to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected from new development. Policy A4 (Noise and Vibration) specifically requires that noise and vibration from plant or machinery is controlled and managed to minimise harm to amenity.

A noise assessment has been conducted by CLEAR Acoustic Design, and is submitted in support of this proposal. The assessment concludes that the noise level from the proposed plant is at least 10dB below the existing background noise level, as demonstrated in sections 4.5 and 4.6 of the report. This is considered an acceptable outcome, in line with Camden Council's requirements and BS 4142: 2014 + A1: 2019 *Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound*. Therefore, it is deemed that noise should not hinder the proposal outcome.

The development therefore complies with Policy A1 and A4 of the 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, as set out in Policy CC2(d). Furthermore, the Energy Efficiency and Adaptation CPG (2021) states that 'Active cooling will only be permitted where its need is demonstrated and steps in the cooling hierarchy are followed.'

As part of the improvement works, the existing chiller is proposed to be removed and replaced with a more efficient unit. As the proposal relates to the replacement of existing cooling plant, we do not consider a thorough assessment against the cooling hierarchy is required.

As the proposals will be replacing existing active cooling within the building, it complies with Policy CC2 of Camden's Local Plan.

Enhancing Community Facilities

Local Plan Policy C2 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 installation of a more efficient unit in association with the existing temperature controlled rooms will improve the quality and function of these teaching spaces, which will benefit both staff and students at the University.

The proposed works will enhance the existing educational space and therefore the proposal complies with Local Plan Policy C2.

Summary

In conclusion, the proposed development complies with the relevant policies of Camden's Local Plan, namely Policies D1, D2, A1, A4 and C2. Furthermore, the works accord with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposed works would preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Furthermore, the Noise Impact Assessment confirms that any noise generated by the plant would be within acceptable limits and would not result in any undue noise disturbance to any sensitive receptors.

The proposal therefore accords with the Development Plan and should 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 (ref. PP-13933830), prepared by Newmark;
- Covering Letter, prepared by Newmark;
- CIL Form; prepared by Newmark;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by Kendall Kingscott;
- DMS Watson Building Existing Elevations, prepared by Kendall Kingscott;
- DMS Watson Building Proposed Elevations, prepared by Kendall Kingscott; and
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Kendall Kingscott; and
- Acoustic Report, prepared by CLEAR Acoustic Design.

The requisite application fee of £383 (inclusive of Planning Portal's admin fee) has been paid online via the Planning Portal at the time of submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact or Paige Ireland () or Archie Simon () of this office should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to receiving notice of your receipt and validation.

Yours faithfully,



Newmark

Paige Ireland
Senior Planning Consultant

Encs. As above