Delegated Report	**Application Address**	**Expiry Date:**	**03/09/2013**
	UCL Anatomy Building Gower Street London WC1E 6BT	**Consultation Expiry Date:**	**08/08/2013**

Officer	**Application Number(s)**
Gavin Sexton	2013/4058/P

Proposal(s)

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

Recommendation(s):	**Grant conditional planning permission**
Application Type:	**Full Planning Permission**

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	**00**	No. of responses No. electronic	**00** **00**	No. of objections	**00**
Summary of consultation responses:	A site notice was placed on 12th July 2013 for three weeks to 2nd August 2013. An advertisement was placed in the Ham & High newspaper on 18th July 2013. There were no responses.					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	Bloomsbury CAAC: no response.					

Site Description

The site is the rear of the Anatomy Building (frontage onto Gower Street), facing an internal circulation route within the UCL campus, accessed via Malet Place.

The Anatomy building is not listed. It is in the Bloomsbury conservation area.

Relevant History

2012/0444/P approved granted **in April 2012** for *"Erection of louvered enclosure at ground floor level to rear of Medical Sciences and Anatomy Building to accommodate two electrical transformers and associated plant."*

2012/2997/P approval granted **6th July 2012** for *"Variation of condition 3 (cladding of acoustic enclosure in brickwork) of planning permission granted 17/04/12 (2012/0444/P) for the erection of louvered enclosure at ground floor level to rear of Medical Sciences and Anatomy Building to accommodate two electrical transformers and associated plant, namely permit the western elevation and doors on the south elevation to be constructed of timber and metal louvers."*

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS5: Managing the impact of growth and development
CS14:Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
DP24:Securing high quality design
DP25: Conserving Camden's heritage
DP26:Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
DP28:Noise

Updated Camden Planning Guidance 2011
CPG1 - Design
National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a screened enclosure at first and second floor of the rear of the Anatomy Building to accommodate three condensor units and one air handling unit, to be operated 24 hours a day, as identified in the submitted noise report.

The material considerations are: design and amenity.

Design

The addition of external plant equipment within the UCL main campus appears to be handled in an ad-hoc approach with limited overall coherence or strategy. Regrettably there is limited coverage of the approach in the current UCL Masterplan. However the application notes *"Overall, UCL's intention is to reduce the amount of services seen on the façades of buildings in the Bloomsbury campus. Areas for removal of services include the rear façades of the northern side of the Anatomy Building, the passageway between Gower Street and the South Courtyard, and the rear of the southern part of the Anatomy Building Where plant areas remain, the intended approach is to attractively screen them".*

The plant structure would be approximately 9.5m wide across the rear elevation, rising from street (basement) level on steel supports (coloured to match the brickwork) to first floor level. It would project up to 3m from the rear elevation and would comprise a platform with solid floor for plant at first floor level, with a decorative screen forming the public elevation at ground am first floor levels. At ground floor the decorative screen would have cutaways to provide views and daylight into the windows. The structure would be tapered to the side to reduce the impact on the outlook from and daylight into the nearest windows. A metal canopy would be added above the rear entranceway.

The design and layout of the screen was the subject of considerable pre-application discussion and has been significantly improved in design since inception. The applicant has provided a detailed justification of the choice of location for the equipment.

The proposed plant location is set apart from the busy Malet Place route which is a key campus thoroughfare. The existing rear elevation of the Anatomy building which faces towards Malet Place has been the subject of unsympathetic interventions in the form of an uncompromising lift shaft and significant ducts which rise from first floor to roof level. These large ducts would be removed as part of the proposals, providing benefits in local views at the levels above the screen, which is welcomed.

The plant screen would be decorative in form, using muted gold coloured perforated anodised aluminium, in rectangular panels which would vary in size from bottom to top. The canopy above the doorway would be in a similar material.

In the normal course of events an application for high level plant installations would not be acceptable. However officers are mindful of :

- the lack of alternative locations
- the removal of some of the existing prominent ducting at high levels on the building
- the location is peripheral to the Malet Place thoroughfare
- the fact that these peripheral locations are still characterised as back-of-house campus

locations and
- the design approach has incorporated cut-away openings and introduced visual interest through the careful choice of materials

The design approach would be effective in visually screening the plant while providing a bespoke design response in the choice of materials. Overall the considered design response of the cladding would mitigate its impact on the building and the conservation area and is acceptable on balance. Given the importance of the cladding design to the acceptability of the proposals a condition would be added to secure a sample panel in site prior to commencement, sufficiently sized to allow verification of the pattern and quality of perforation.

Amenity

The plant location is entirely enclosed within the UCL campus, with no exposure to external residential or noise sensitive facades. The submitted noise report identifies that the nearest noise sensitive receptors are located approx 20m from the installation on the nearest building which is not to be served by the new plant equipment. It notes that the screen would provide an immediate acoustic barrier to the plant. The report predicts that the plant equipment will conform to Camden's noise standards, taking account of the cumulative impact of other plant recently installed in the area (see site history). The standard 5dB condition would be added to the permission, with a requirement to adhere to the recommendations of the noise report.

Conclusion

On balance the proposed plant and screen would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the conservation area, nor would they harm the amenity of nearby occupants, in compliance with the relevant LDF policies and Camden supplementary Planning Guidance.

Recommendation: Grant conditional permission