

**Conquest House, 37-38 John Street & 28-30 Theobald's Road, Bloomsbury,
London, WC1N 2BQ**

Design & Access Statement



In support of an application for advertisement consent to display a non-illuminated vertical banner sign on the corner of the John Street elevation of the Hult International Business School

**Prepared for Hult International Business School
by
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Allen Planning Limited on behalf of Hult International Business School in support of an application for advertisement consent to display a non-illuminated vertical banner sign on the corner of the John Street elevation of Conquest House.
- 1.2 The subject building has recently been granted planning permission (Ref: 2011/2832/P) subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement, for the change of use from Class B1 (office) to flexible use as either office use (Class B1) and/or educational/non-residential institution use (Class D1) from lower ground floor level to fourth floor level.
- 1.3 Hult has now acquired the leasehold of the property, and is in the process of undertaking the internal fit-out, to enable the Business School to start operating from their new London campus in spring 2012.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Statement is to describe the design details and specification of the proposed vertical banner signage to identify Hult's new campus by displaying the internationally recognised branding and logo image on the corner of the School's building. It also considers the relevant planning policy for advertisement consent proposals in Camden, and within Conservation Areas.

2.0 Relevant Background

- 2.1 Hult International Business School is a global institution that was originally established in 1964, by Arthur D Little Inc, the world's oldest management consulting firm and was called the Arthur D Little School of Management. It was renamed Hult International Business School in 2003, honouring benefactor Bertil Hult's personal vision and commitment to providing a truly international business education.
- 2.2 Hult International Business School is a top-ranked business education institution, offering MBA, Master and Undergraduate programmes in five locations around the globe with campuses in Boston, Dubai, Shanghai, London and San Francisco. It is currently ranked the 27th best business education in the world and the 17th best business education in the U.S. by the Economist Intelligence Unit. The Financial Times has also recognized it as one of the Top 100 business schools worldwide.

3.0 Site Context

- 3.1 Conquest House is situated on the corner of Theobald's Road and John Street in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building occupies four plots, 37-38 John Street (adjacent to the listed 36 John Street) and (turning the corner onto) 24 and 26 Theobald's Road. Following extensive bomb damage to the site during WWII, the building was rebuilt around 1955 in a style to match the existing Georgian terrace which is Grade II listed.
- 3.2 Conquest House is unlisted and consists of lower ground, ground and four upper floors and is of a traditional design, in brick with a rusticated stone ground floor storey and

regular fenestration with white painted timber sash windows and rubbed brick arches.

- 3.3 John Street is the principal elevation and is organised under a pediment, to a total of four storey's plus mansard roof with dormers. The existing windows on the front elevations appear to be original to the building, and are designed as an integral part of the elevation – relating to the organisation and materials of the façade, and contributing to the historic appeal of the townscape, notably the adjacent listed buildings on John Street. It is lined on both sides by four-storey Georgian town houses that are currently in use for office and residential purposes.
- 3.4 Nos. 28-30 Theobald's Road is a five-storey building with a basement level on the northern side of Theobald's Road. The fourth floor appears as a mansard roof addition to the front. The 20th century building is unlisted, and was previously used by the Council as a District Housing Office (Class B1), until planning permission was granted for its change of use to residential at upper floors, and use as a restaurant for the lower and ground floors in 2006. The building lies adjacent to the Holborn Library on the western side, and a Law Commission office building on the eastern side.



Figure 1 – overview of site location

- 3.5 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was designated in 1968 and stretches from the University of London and Fitzroy Square in the west to Gray's Inn Road in the east, from Oxford Street in the south to Euston Road in the north. The area contains a high quality streetscape and whilst it is not of architectural importance, its location demands a sensitive approach.
- 3.6 The application site is situated in a mixed-use residential and commercial area containing buildings of differing ages, form and aesthetics.
- 3.7 The area benefits from a high level of public transport accessibility; Chancery Lane, Farringdon and Holborn Underground stations are in close proximity to the site and a

number of bus routes run along Theobald's Road. It is a sustainable location for the Business School.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.1 The application site has an extensive planning history and the Council's register confirms that a number of planning applications for alterations and extensions to Conquest House have been submitted within the last 3 years or so. Most recently, this has included the planning application (Ref: 2011/2832/P) submitted by Hult International Business School for the change of use of the property from Class B1 (office) to flexible use as either office use (Class B1) and/or educational/non-residential institution use (Class D1) from lower ground floor level to fourth floor level.
- 4.2 This planning permission was granted subject to a Section 106 Agreement on 16th September 2011 and is currently in the process of being implemented.

5.0 Proposal

- 5.1 The proposal for which advertisement consent is sought is for the display of a non-illuminated external vertical banner sign which will be fixed to the corner of the building on the John Street elevation by a heavy duty wall mount system which will extend from the wall for the width of the banner.
- 5.2 The banner will be made from external grade PVC, and the sign will read 'HULT' in a vertical direction with the logo shown underneath which will read 'HULT International Business School, Established 1964'. The predominant colour of the banner will be Pantone 300c (blue), with white lettering.
- 5.3 Hult is seeking consent to display the banner for a period of 10 years, which reflects the length of the planning permission (Ref: 2011/2832/P) that was granted by the Council for the flexible change of use of the premises to educational/non-residential institution – see Informative 1.
- 5.4 Drawing Nos: 0243_GA_103 and 104 prepared by SA Architects shows the proposed design of the banner, and a more detailed description of the signage is provided in Section 7 of this Statement.

6.0 Planning Policy Context

- 6.1 The Statutory Development Plan is provided by the Camden LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents that were adopted by the Council on 8th November 2010.
- 6.2 **Policy DP24** sets out the Council's detailed approach to securing high quality design, and confirms that all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, are expected to be of the highest standard of design and should consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; the character and proportions of the existing building; the quality of materials to be used; and the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level.

- 6.3 **Policy DP25** provides the Council's approach for dealing with Camden's heritage. In Conservation Areas, such as Bloomsbury, account will be taken of the various statements, and only development that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area will be permitted.
- 6.4 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy that was adopted by the Council in April 2011, confirms at paragraph 5.49 that the installation of signage in many cases requires advertisement consent; this is particularly the case for illuminated signage which can have a major impact in conservation areas. A proliferation of signage, even of an appropriate design could harm the conservation area.
- 6.5 Paragraph 5.51 states that new development may increase pressure for more intensive advertising, and this will be resisted where it is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.6 The Council has also produced more detailed design guidance in a separate SPD - Camden Planning Guidance which forms part of the LDF that was adopted on 6th April 2011.
- 6.7 Section 8 of the Guidance provides advice on the design and siting of advertisements so that they contribute positively to the appearance and character of an area. The Council advises that in general, the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account:
- The character and design of the property;
 - The appearance of the surroundings; and
 - The external fabric of the building.
- 6.8 In describing what advertisements are acceptable, paragraph 8.5 advises that good quality advertisements respect the architectural features of the host building and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It goes on to say that the most satisfactory advertisements are those which take into account the character and design of the property, its surroundings and alter the external fabric of the building as little as possible.
- 6.9 Paragraph 8.6 states that all advertisements should respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and setting. All signs should serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings and be constructed of materials that are sympathetic to the host building and the surrounding area.
- 6.10 Paragraph 8.7 adds that advertisements will only be acceptable at fascia level or below, as above can appear visually obtrusive and unattractive, and where illuminated can cause light pollution to neighbouring properties. Furthermore, advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings.

6.11 Paragraph 8.23 states that banner advertisements will only be permitted where:

- They relate to landmark or unique buildings, such as festival venues, museums, and do not detract from the appearance and form of the host building or the surrounding environment.
- In some commercial areas flags or banners may be considered a suitable form of display. Within residential areas, conservation areas, and on or near listed building the Council are primarily concerned with safeguarding the amenity, character and appearance of these areas and buildings and therefore it is unlikely that such advertisements will be supported.

7.0 Design & Access Considerations

7.1 The proposed banner has been considered alongside the following design and access considerations:

- Proposed Use:* The proposal is for the display of a non-illuminated vertical banner sign sited on the corner of John Street, to identify the new London campus for Hult International Business School. The advertisement period sought is 10 years.
- Amount:* The application is for a non-illuminated single vertical banner sign which measures 1220mm x 6096mm. The sign will be fixed to the wall with a heavy duty tough steel mount.
- Layout:* The banner will be displayed on the corner of the John Street elevation of the building, as it turns onto Theobald Road. The proposed sign is vertical and displays the HULT lettering and logo underneath. Details of the logo are provided with the application. The heavy duty wall mount shall extend from the wall for the width of the banner. The knuckle end of the pole to secure the banner and finish the wall bracket is approximately 20mm. The total length of the extension from the wall is 1320mm. A pole shall be fitted at the top and bottom of the banner.

The proposed dimension from natural pavement level to the base of the banner is 5850mm.

The proposed dimensions of each of the letters and logo are shown on the Proposed Detailed Elevation – Dwg No: 0243_GA_104.

- Scale:* The total width of the extension of the banner including the wall mount, from the gable wall will be 1320mm. The height of the banner is 6095mm. The banner will project beyond the wall of the building by 1320mm, but will be within the limit of the black railings that enclose the ground floor of the building, and will therefore not overhang the public highway.

- v. *Appearance:* The banner will be made from exterior grade PVC, as it will be exposed to the elements, and therefore needs to be durable. The background colour of the banner will be Panetone 300c, and the HULT text and logo will be white.

The heavy duty wall mount is made from tough steel, and will be designed to be wind loading safe. It is designed with a tensioner to ease fitting, and for adjusting and renewing the banner.

- vi. *Inclusive Access:* The proposed banner will not alter access arrangements to the building.

8.0 Planning Assessment

- 8.1 The proposal has been assessed and justified alongside the relevant policy considerations below.

- i. *Design of Advertisement:* The proposed vertical banner which will be displayed on the corner of the building, 5.85m above pavement level, has been designed to respect the form, fabric, design and scale of Conquest House and the Conservation Area setting.

The proposed fabric of the banner and the wall mount fitting are high quality, and will not involve altering the external fabric of the building. The siting has also ensured that the banner will not obscure or damage specific architectural features on the elevation of Conquest House. It also enables the ground floor of the property to remain uncluttered. The sign will not be illuminated, and will therefore not cause any harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

The sign is required by the School as it directly relates to their new London campus. Hult is one of the top-ranked business schools in the world, and it is important that the presence of their new facilities is recognised within the community which they wish to be a part of.

- ii.
- iii. *Impact on Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area:* The corner of the building is considered to provide the only suitable location for displaying the vertical banner. There are no other options at ground floor level because of the fenestration, stone cladding and black railing that encloses the building.

The size of the banner has been designed so as not to detract from this prominent location, or the appearance and form of Conquest House.

There are buildings within the surrounding area of the property that display similar banners, such as Holborn Library which adjoins the property. Therefore, it is not considered that this proposal for advertisement consent will be out of keeping, nor will it have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.



Fig 2- nearby banner

Hult is not seeking to undertake any external alterations to the existing building to accommodate the School, however, they do intend to bring back into use two vacant buildings and create an active street-front in this location. This will both preserve and enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area, whilst adding vibrancy and activity.

- iv. *Views:* The proposal is not considered to have any impact on any of the Strategic Views, or the Strategic View Background Consultation Area.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The proposal has been assessed alongside the key considerations for advertisement and signage on buildings in Camden, and is compliant with the policy context. In particular, it is held that:-

- ✓ The proposed design of the vertical banner is of a high quality, and is able to be sited without detracting from the host building, or undertaking any external alterations. The proposal complies with Policy DP24.
- ✓ The banner will be displayed in the most appropriate location for the building, and the extent of the projection is contained within the black railing enclosure that surrounds the

building. It will not overhang the public highway, or distract passing vehicle users or traffic.

- ✓ The banner is non-illuminated, and the proposed scale will safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties. In addition, the wall mount has been wind loaded for public safety reasons.
- ✓ This proposal will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- ✓ It is important for Hult to be able to display this banner as part of their relocation to their new London campus at Conquest House. It will also assist the School to continue to build their reputation not only internationally but also in supporting the local community.