



## Royal Veterinary College

APRIL 2009

Planning Statement: Social Learning Cafe

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

- 1.1.1. This planning statement introduces the content and nature of the planning application for development within an existing lightwell/courtyard at the Royal Veterinary College's (RVC) Hobday Building and assesses the development proposal against planning policy and material considerations. The planning application, submitted on behalf of the RVC, seeks full planning permission for the enclosure of the lightwell/ courtyard with an EFTE roof to provide a social learning café and library reading area.
- 1.1.2. This planning statement forms part of a suite of documents and should be read in conjunction with the submitted application forms, schedules, planning application drawings and Design and Access Statement.

### **1.2. Structure of the document**

- 1.2.1. This planning statement is intended to provide guidance to the application documents. The following sections detail the structure of the document:

Section 1: Introduction – this provides an overview of the content of the planning application.

Section 2: Description of Proposed Development – this describes the approach for devising the scheme for which planning approval is sought.

Section 3: Planning Policy Justification – this provides an analysis and response to the key issues raised by relevant national, regional and local planning policies and other material considerations.

Section 4: Conclusion

### **1.3. Site Location and Description**

- 1.3.1. The proposed development site is located within the southern lightwell/ courtyard of the RVC's Hobday Building which is currently has limited use by students. The building is located within the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. The Hobday building is bounded to the north by the Beaumont Animal Hospital (part of the RVC campus), to the south by three storey college buildings, to the west by four storey residential buildings, and to the east by light industrial warehouses. The lightwell/ courtyard where the proposed development is to be located is not visible from the street and will not impact on adjacent buildings or affect the character of the conservation area. The site extends to 0.3 hectares and is shown in context of its surroundings on plan 2001\_GAD\_400001\_A.

## **1.4. Relevant Planning History**

1.4.1. There are no applications of direct relevance to the proposed development. Two applications which have minor relevance are the following:

- 2004/2972/P – Installation of ramp for disabled access to main entrance and associated alterations. Granted 01-09-2004.
- 2003/1638/P - Submission of details of sample of facing materials (to lighten the brick colour) pursuant to condition 02 of the planning permission dated 19/09/02 (Reg. No. PEX0200554). Granted 21-08-2003.

## **2. Description of Proposed Development**

### **2.1. Introduction**

2.1.1. The RVC is the UK's largest, oldest and only independent veterinary school and one of the leading providers in veterinary education. The College seeks to evolve with the times and provide its students with outstanding teaching, research and learning facilities. The RVC has identified the lightwell/ courtyard in the Hobday Building as having potential for helping the College provide a social learning facility within the existing Camden campus. The lightwell/ courtyard currently provides an informal recreation space, but its use is limited by being open-air and thus making it weather and season dependent.

### **2.2. Proposed Development**

2.2.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a social learning facility which will be comprised of the following elements:

- An EFTE roof canopy which will enclose the lightwell/ courtyard at the third floor level of the building;
- A light finish to the existing elevations where possible to reflect daylight and increase ambient daylight levels within the courtyard;
- A deli/café to be located at the existing basement level
- Refurbished WCs at basement level
- A break out terrace at ground level created on the roof of the refurbished WCs
- A mezzanine library reading room which will connect via a bridge to the existing library on the first floor.
- Access via bridges and stairs (including platform stair lift)

2.2.2. This description provides a summary of the proposed development. A fuller description is provided in the Design and Access Statement (DAS). The Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the DAS and submitted plans.

### **2.3. Planning Drawings**

2.3.1. The following drawings accompany the planning application:

- 2001\_GAD\_400001\_A: Area plan
- 2001\_GAD\_400002\_A: Site plan

- 2001\_GAD\_410001\_A: Plan basement
- 2001\_GAD\_410002\_A: Plan Ground
- 2001\_GAD\_410003\_A: Plan First
- 2001\_GAD\_410004\_A: Plan Second
- 2001\_GAD\_410005\_A: Plan Roof
- 2001\_GAD\_410006\_A: Section AA
- 2001\_GAD\_410007\_A: Section BB

### 3. Planning Policy Justification

#### 3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. S.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 states that ‘development must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise’
- 3.1.2. This section sets out the relevant planning policy and material considerations and demonstrates how the proposed development meets them. The first part of this section sets out the relevant policy and material considerations. The second part discusses each of the relevant policies by themes identified below.

#### 3.2. Statutory Development Plan

- 3.2.1. The site is located within the jurisdiction of London Borough (LB) of Camden. The development plan comprises the London Plan (as amended 2008) and LB Camden UDP 2006. The site is located in the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area but is not visible from the street.
- 3.2.2. The following development plan policies are relevant to this application:

##### **The London Plan (2008)**

<b>Policy 3A.25</b>	Higher and Further Education
<b>Policy 4A.1</b>	Tackling climate change
<b>Policy 4A.3</b>	Sustainable design and construction
<b>Policy 4B.1</b>	Design principles for a compact city
<b>Policy 4B.2</b>	Promoting world-class architecture and design
<b>Policy 4B.12</b>	Heritage conservation
<b>Policy 4B.13</b>	Heritage conservation-led regeneration

##### **Local Plan: LB Camden UDP 2006**

<b>Policy SD7</b>	Light, noise and vibration pollution
<b>Policy SD8</b>	Disturbance from plant and machinery
<b>Policy B1</b>	General Design Principles
<b>Policy B3</b>	Alterations and extensions
<b>Policy B7</b>	Conservation Areas
<b>Policy C1C</b>	Educational Facilities

### **3.3. Material Considerations**

3.3.1. The emerging LB Camden Local Development Framework (LDF) is a material consideration. The Core Strategy, which recently underwent consultation on the Preferred Options in autumn 2008, is still currently preceded by the adopted UDP as it provides the most relevant policies by which planning applications can be determined. However, in the following response to key policies and other material considerations and guidance (below), reference is made to relevant emerging Core Strategy policies where relevant. These are:

<b>CS8</b>	Promoting high quality places
<b>CS10</b>	Supporting community services and facilities

3.3.2. The LB Camden Planning Guidance 2006 is supplementary planning and design guidance which is material to the determination of this planning application.

3.3.3. The following National Planning Policy Statements and Guidance (PPS/PPG) are also relevant material considerations:

<b>PPS1</b>	Sustainable Development
<b>PPG15</b>	Planning and the Historic Environment

### **3.4. Response to key policies and other material considerations and guidance**

3.4.1. Relevant National, Regional and Local Policy related to the proposed development have been reviewed under the following headings:

- **3.5** Maintaining high quality higher education facilities
- **3.6** Design
- **3.7** Conservation
- **3.8** Sustainable Development

3.4.2. For each topic the policy position is summarised and a response provided demonstrating how the development proposals comply with policy.

### **3.5. Maintaining high quality higher education facilities**

- 3.5.1. Development plan policies seek to safeguard higher education facilities which contribute positively to London's economy. The London Plan recognises that higher education is a major employer and that graduates of the facilities often remain in London following their studies and contribute to the local labour supply. London Plan Policy 3A.25 advocates that the needs of educational facilities are met and that LPAs promote policies aimed at supporting and maintaining London's international reputation as a centre of excellence in higher education.
- 3.5.2. LB Camden Policy C1C covers educational establishments including universities. The UDP recognises that the University of London has many facilities in the Borough and that the Council will support the future growth in the University, its Colleges, and other educational institutions in a way that is sensitive to its surroundings and maintains the amenity of existing residential communities in Central London.
- 3.5.3. In addition to the development plan policies, the Camden Core Strategy Preferred Option CS10 (2008) also identifies the importance of higher education to the Borough's employment provision and aims to support these facilities as far as possible.

#### **Policy Response**

- 3.5.4. The proposed social learning facility accords with the development policies at strategic (London) and local (Borough) levels. The proposed development aims to enhance the learning experience for students using the facility. By making better use of the existing courtyard students will have the benefit of a new café and break out spaces, additional linkages and access to different parts of the building and a library reading room. This will enhance the College's reputation of delivering first class educational/ employment facilities according with development plan policies.
- 3.5.5. In addition, the proposed development is contained within the existing lightwell/ courtyard and will not impact at all on residential communities in Central London. This accords with guidance provide in LB Camden's UDP.

### **3.6. Design**

- 3.6.1. Development plan policies seek to promote high quality design which complements the local context (London Plan Policies 4B.1, 4B.2 and LB Camden Policy B1). PPS1 *Delivering Sustainable Development*, a material consideration, supports this by stating that 'good design is indivisible from good planning'. Furthermore, PPS1 states that 'good design should contribute positively to making places better for people'.
- 3.6.2. Camden's Preferred Option Policy CS8 aims for high quality places which consists of promoting excellence in design while preserving the local character.

## Policy Response

- 3.6.3. The Design and Access Statement, which constitutes part of this submission, provides in detail the design approach taken in forming the proposed development's layout, scale, use, landscaping and appearance.
- 3.6.4. The proposed development respects the applicable elements of design criteria stipulated in the development plan policies. The proposed development will maximise the potential of the College site conforming to London Plan policy 4B.1 (design principles for a compact city). Furthermore, the proposed development accords with LB Camden's Policy B1 – General Design Principles – which states that development should:
- Respect its site and setting: the proposed development is contained within the courtyard of the existing building. The proposed development will not affect any of the neighbouring properties. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development enhances the function of the existing space by incorporating better access, a new café, social learning spaces and a library reading room.
  - Be safe and accessible to all/ improve spaces around buildings: the proposed development will enhance access to different parts of the building. The proposed development will provide additional linkages to the library and the basement levels of the existing building. Full details of access can be seen in the Design and Access Statement which forms part of this planning submission.
  - Be sustainable and promote energy efficiency and efficient use of resources: the proposed development will use a clear EFTE roof to enclose the space. Where required the walls will be lightened to improve ambient light levels. It is considered that the proposed development will be lit principally by daylight and be accompanied by electrical lighting where necessary. The use of as much passive light as possible will help to reduce the demand for artificial lighting and energy therefore according with London Plan Policy 4A.1's goal of reducing energy.
  - Adaptable: The proposed development proposes a mezzanine pod which will be used as the library reading room. A café will be located at basement level. These two elements will be connected by stairs. The remaining space will be an atrium. It is considered that the space is highly flexible and will easily accommodate future uses and layout changes.
  - Landscaping – not applicable
  - Increase attractiveness of the area and not harm its appearance: the proposed development will be contained within the existing building and not be visible from outside of the College and there will be no impacts on neighbouring buildings.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed development fully accords with the development plan design policies.

### **3.7. Conservation**

- 3.7.1. The College building is situated within LB Camden UDP's Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. Development plan policies require heritage and conservation areas to be respected, protected and enhanced where possible (London Plan Policies 4B.12, 4B.13 and LB Camden Policy B7).
- 3.7.2. PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment seeks to identify and protect historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. With regards to conservation areas, PPG15 states that LPAs should consider the quality and interest in the area as a whole and not individual buildings. In addition, PPG15 states that developments within a conservation area should be imaginative and of a high quality design without the need to imitate former styles but ensure that the context of the area is adhered to.

#### **Policy Response**

- 3.7.3. The proposed development will not impact on the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area as the social learning facilities will be contained entirely within the existing lightwell/ courtyard of the College building. The Conservation Area will be protected allowing the proposed development to accord with the development plan policies.
- 3.7.4. Furthermore, London Plan policy 4B.13 states the LPAs should support schemes which bring redundant or under-used buildings and spaces into appropriate use. The development will make better use of an informal recreation space which is currently exposed to the elements by enclosing the lightwell/courtyard allowing the space to be used throughout the year. The proposed development will provide a library reading room, a café and further social learning spaces maximising the potential of the lightwell/courtyard. The additional learning spaces for students will add to the exceptional educational facilities that the College provides.

### **3.8. Sustainable Development**

- 3.8.1. Development plan policies promote sustainable development, protection of the environment and mitigation of climate change measures. The London Plan Policy 4A.1 Tackling climate change provides that LPAs should promote measures in mitigating and adapting to climate change. The Policy provides a hierarchy which is to be used to assess applications:
- using less energy, in particular by adopting sustainable design and construction measures (Policy 4A.3)
  - supplying energy efficiently, in particular by prioritising decentralised energy generation (Policy 4A.6), and

- using renewable energy (Policy 4A.7).

3.8.2. PPS1, a material consideration, promotes the delivery of sustainable development in terms of, in the context of this application, prudent use of natural resources and sustainable economic development. In addition, Camden's Core Strategy Preferred Approach CS5 – Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards – provides that measures should be taken to mitigate or reduce the effects of climate change.

### **Policy Response**

3.8.3. The proposed development will use a translucent EFTE roof to enclose the proposed development and will lighten areas of the existing lightwell/ courtyard walls to increase ambient light maximising the amount of natural light in the social learning space. EFTE roofs have been used in key architectural projects such as the Beijing National Aquatics Centre (Water Cube), the Allianz Arena football Stadium and the Eden Project in Cornwall. EFTE roofs have much less embodied energy than glass and are much lighter in weight requiring fewer steel supports therefore providing a more sustainable material.

3.8.4. A daylight, sunlight and shadow analysis is provided as part of the Design and Access Statement and shows the amount of light penetrating into the lightwell/courtyard at different times of the day and year. Using a translucent roof will maintain as much of this natural light as possible reducing the need for artificial light and energy. This accords with development plan policy, especially London Plan Policy Energy 4A.1 and is considered to contribute to a more sustainable development. In addition, the roof of the atrium is designed to provide solar shading to avoid overheating and demand for mechanical heating. The design incorporates a natural stack-effect ventilation strategy and night cooling to achieve this.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

- 4.1.1. The proposed development provides the opportunity for a unique architectural response to transferring an underused space into a unique social learning facility comprising of a new café, linkages and access within the existing building and a library reading room. It provides a social and educational space which students and staff can use throughout the year.
- 4.1.2. The proposals have been carefully designed to represent the optimum solution for the development of the lightwell/ courtyard which recognises the need to deliver additional learning spaces for students while maximising the use of the current building and respecting the historical context within which the building is located. The proposed development accords with the development plan and other material considerations such as national planning policy statements, LB Camden's emerging LDF Core Strategy and the Camden Planning Guidance 2006. Overall, we believe that the proposals provide a significant benefit for the Royal Veterinary College and its students and staff.