9 HENEAGE STREET, SPITALFIELDS, LONDON E1 5LJ
telephone 020 7377 9262 *facsimile* 020 7247 7854 *e-mail* mjp@mjparchitects.co.uk web www.mjparchitects.co.uk

0701 – Print Room Café, South Wing Building, University College London
Design and Access Statement in support of the Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications 12th June 2007

Client

University College London Estates and Facilities Division

Site

The former Print Room is located in the basement of the Grade I Listed South Wing Building, within University College London's Bloomsbury campus. It is situated along the lower south elevation of the South Wing building, forming the northern backdrop to the South Quadrangle.

The site is flanked by the UCL Medical Sciences and Anatomy Buildings to the west, and the Andrew Huxley Building to the east. The UCL Institute of Physiology building faces the proposed site, and completes the southern boundary of the South Quadrangle.

Due to the change in levels between the Main and South Quadrangles, the former print room sits a storey below the Main Quadrangle, but only nominally 280 mm below the level of the South Quadrangle. It is surrounded by academic buildings within UCL's ownership. It is situated approximately 55 m from Gower Street, however there is no direct access to Gower Street from the South Quadrangle at present, with Malet Place and Gordon Street providing the main routes for external pedestrian and vehicular access.

Overview

Within the UCL Bloomsbury campus, the South Quadrangle is an important link along the main University thoroughfare, connecting the Main Quadrangle and UCL academic buildings situated to the north of the estate, to the UCL departments sited along Malet Place.

Enhancements to the streetscape for the South Quadrangle was carried out fairly recently, as part of the development of the Andrew Huxley building (completed in 2005). However, the current setting does not provide a social focus for the wider University community.

The proposal for the insertion of a café into the former print room seeks to create an informal social focus and shared facility for both the adjacent buildings and the wider UCL community, in order to enhance inter-disciplinary interaction between the faculties and departments of UCL. This will also develop the potential of the South Quadrangle as an informal event space for UCL, providing a counterpoint to the formal qualities of the Main Quadrangle, which is the setting for many of the University's activities.

Background to the South Wing Building

The South Wing was built in 1869-74 and was designed by T. Hayter Lewis, to continue Wilkins' original architectural concept for the University College quadrangle. The building was initially occupied by the University College School, and became part of the UCL estate when the School moved out in 1907. As one of the buildings providing the setting for the Main Quadrangle, the South Wing building is Grade I Listed and the proposed alterations are designed to be sensitive to the inherent qualities of the building.

It is a long and narrow building enclosing the south side of the Main Quadrangle, with a neo-Classical Portland stone frontage on the north face of the building. By contrast, the building elevation onto the South Quadrangle is composed of English bonded brickwork, with spare detailing and large rectangular sash windows, forming a comparatively restrained and utilitarian backdrop on the south.

The internal building treatment is austere, with rooms located off both sides of a central corridor. The existing finishes (intended for the school) were always austere, and this is particularly apparent on the basement level.

The principal significance of the South Wing building lies in the way the main quadrangle façade successfully complements Wilkins' architectural concept for the College. With the exception of the main corridors and the ground and first floor rooms in the semi-rotunda (on the north elevation), the south elevation and the internal features are not considered to be of notable significance. The proposed site for the café therefore does not form a significant part of the historic building.

A detailed analysis of the historic core of the UCL Bloomsbury estate was carried out by Alan Baxter and Associates between November 2002 and December 2003, in order to produce the outline Management Guidelines for the UCL Estates and Facilities Division. A draft report of these Management Guidelines and the Gazetteer (an easy reference document to the history and significance of each building on the UCL core estate) was produced in December 2003.

We have used these Management Guidelines in the preliminary analysis and development of our proposals. The relevant sections of the above reports have been extracted and collated into Appendix A, for reference in connection with the proposed café.

Basement / former Print Room

The café site was formerly a print room for UCL, with a small office occupying part of the central area. The original existing ceilings and some of the upper window sashes were concealed by suspended ceiling panels, and the space subdivided by solid partitions into a series of smaller rooms. These demountable partitions and ceiling panels were removed when the basement became unoccupied. However redundant ceiling grid hangers and electrical cabling are still in place, and these detract from the spatial and visual qualities of the existing building fabric, creating a haphazard space.

It is currently vacant. The primary access is located within the South Wing building, via the central corridor connecting to the South Junction Link, which is one of the key circulation hubs within UCL.

There are existing mechanical and electrical services installed at high level along the length of the basement, serving the upper floors of the South Wing. There are also two main runs of major University communication and data cables across the width of the basement. These are routed through the South Quadrangle and carried at high level within the basement, to the Switch Room and BT cables station located on the opposite side of the internal corridor. These will need to be retained and protected during the proposed works, as they serve the wider UCL community.

The total gross area of the existing café site is 200 sq m. There are existing water supply and drainage services located at the west end of the basement, which will be adapted to supply the new café.

The current electrical power outlets are generally located on the dado trunking along the walls, and there are several cast iron radiators situated below the window openings. As the basement has functioned primarily as a support space for the University, the existing installation of services are utilitarian and frequently haphazard. These mainly detract from the spatial qualities of this area of the basement.

At present, the glass panels to the lower sash windows along the west end of the café site are of mismatched obscured glass panels. These detract from the overall appearance of the south elevation, and form a visual barrier between the café site and the South Quadrangle.

External site constraints

There is a skip currently located outside the café site and the Concrete Laboratory, at the northwest corner of the South Quad. The existing access for delivery and refuse collection vehicles, and for fire appliance access needs to be maintained along the South Wing frontage.

There are major mechanical, electrical and IT service runs located below the South Quadrangle, and the proposed external alterations will take these into account.

The Proposed Cafe

Our proposal seeks to complement and enhance the positive spatial attributes of the existing basement, which has pleasant proportions and an attractive outlook to the South Quadrangle. The main strategy is to remove the existing redundant fittings and later date alterations to the building fabric, and to restore the original existing features. We have minimised our proposed alterations by retaining as much of the existing interior as possible.

The café will be an informal socialising and study space for the wider UCL community of students and staff, with the flexibility to cater for events. It provides both lounge and table seating arrangements for 65 internal seats, and has the capacity to cater to a maximum of 100 café occupants.

During the day, the café will serve hot and cold drinks, and light meals; with two menu changes per day. It will cater for both takeaway and in-café consumption. Bottled beer and wine by the glass may be available after working hours, pending licensing requirements.

There are two entrances proposed to the café. The first entrance uses the existing route located along the corridor. This connects the café to the South Junction Link, a key UCL circulation hub, and it provides level access from the Main Quadrangle (situated a level above the basement) and to the UCL faculties and buildings on the northern campus boundary. This entrance also provides level access to the main WCs located along the South Junction route, which is approximately 28 m away from the proposed cafe. In addition, there is level access from the South Quadrangle into the proposed café site, via the South Junction entrance and corridor.

The second café entrance is proposed from the South Quadrangle. This sits along the axis of the main southern campus route through Malet Place, and via the underpass at the Institute of Physiology. The South Quadrangle falls in level along the east-west direction, creating a drop in level to the existing basement.

We propose constructing a simple metal clad and glazed entrance lobby at the South Quadrangle entrance, located on axis with Malet Place. This creates a focal point for the Quadrangle, and a clear identity for the new entrance. The new entrance is sensitively inserted onto an existing bay within the South Wing brick façade, and is designed to appear to be disengaged from the main building elevation by a recessed drainage channel around the bay.

Within the café, we propose a suspended oak veneered open ribbed acoustic ceiling to the east end of the café site. These allow the existing communications and data cable trays installed at high level to be screened off, while the open ribbed design of the ceiling panels creates a visually minimal and light element within the existing space.

Along the length of the café, we have designed a simple and narrow run of suspended ppc perforated aluminium ceiling panel on open ceiling hangers, to conceal the mechanical and electrical services installed at high level. This element connects the different areas of lounge and table seating to the servery, and enables the M&E services to the floors above and the proposed M&E services for the café to be centrally located, therefore minimising the visual clutter within the existing space.

The food preparation area is located at the west end of the café site, as there are existing water supply and drainage services which will be adapted to supply the café. This area will be enclosed by a new and stepped profile solid partition wall, and suspended ceiling. This protects the existing timber boarding to the walls and the decorative canted ceiling

panels, and enables hygienic working surfaces to be installed without affecting the existing features.

Micro climate and Ventilation strategy

This area of the basement is south facing, and the tall existing sash windows create a bright internal space. This enables the use of lighting within the café to be kept to a minimum during the day, reducing the energy consumption and the café seating areas are located along the windows to take advantage of the pleasant outlook onto the South Quadrangle.

The cafe will be naturally and mechanically ventilated, with manually openable (restored) sash windows along the south elevation. It is proposed to provide mechanical comfort cooling during the summer via fan coil units located along the north wall of the café site. The condensers will be remotely located away from the South Wing elevation, and placed within the existing services zone adjacent to the Concrete Laboratory.

Low level wall panel heating is proposed, reinstating the existing natural ventilation air intake grilles below the windows, and providing new cast iron air intake grilles below the windows at the east end of the café site to match the existing.

Within the food preparation area, background ventilation and extract is provided at high level, via exhaust vents fitted within the upper panels of the window at the end of the café site. These replace the existing redundant window fan within the upper sash. The food preparation area will only provide for the regeneration of food and assist basic food preparation, and no major cooking facilities will be provided. The requirement for ventilation and extract is therefore minimal, and can be accommodated by the window extract vents noted above.

Changes to the Listed Building Fabric

The proposal involves the following changes to the Listed Structure:

- Removal of one external window and brickwork below window to create an entrance.
- Structural reinforcement of the existing timber sub-floor below the proposed food preparation area and servery.
- Repair works to the existing walls, ceilings and floors, and to the existing doors and windows.
- Replacement of one internal door with a new glazed fire door to create a more visually accessible entrance from the corridor
- A new single storey metal clad and glazed entrance box to the South elevation.

- Removal of a recent door set and wall opening, and infilling the openings to reinstate the original wall layout.
- Replacement of mismatched obscured glass panels to the lower sash windows, to create views between the proposed café and the South Quadrangle.
- Addition of new suspended open ribbed oak veneered acoustic ceiling to part of the basement, to visually screen the existing communication and data cables.
- Addition of new suspended PPC perforated aluminium ceiling panels on open wire ceiling hangers, to conceal the mechanical and electrical services installed at high level.
- Installation of demountable partition and suspended ceiling to east end of the café site, for the proposed food preparation area.
- Replacement of the existing mechanical and electrical services installed at high level with a new and centrally located M&E services and distribution zone, which serve the floors above and the proposed café.

Building and Structure of the Proposed entrance box

The proposed entrance lobby from the South Quadrangle is a simple one storey box, designed to sit sensitively within an existing bay along the South Wing brick façade. This is designed to be visually separated from the main building elevation by a narrow recessed drainage channel around the bay opening, with the box appearing to be lightly inserted onto the existing building.

The new entrance box has a gross area of 9 sq m, comprising a rectangular 5.5 m by 1.5m footprint set into the existing building bay. It is composed of three interlocked L-shaped elements, namely the metal clad roof and west wall, the glazed south and east walls, and the cantilevered steel portal frame.

The self-finished metal cladding panels (colour graphite grey) to the roof and west wall of the entrance box forms an L-shaped profile on the south elevation. The colour of the metal panels is complementary to the existing English bonded dark brown brick façade. During the summer, the metal cladding panels form a pleasant visual contrast to the vine-covered façade of the South Wing, creating a clear identity for the entrance box. The metal clad roof also serves to reduce the potential solar gain within the entrance, as it is south facing. In addition, the metal clad west wall conceals the existing visual clutter and service zone located on the west boundary of the South Quadrangle.

By contrast, the frameless integrated double glazing to the south and east wall of the entrance box addresses the principal pedestrian approaches to the South Quadrangle

from Malet Place and Gordon Street, and the minimal detailing of the glazed elements is complementary to the restrained detailing of the existing South Wing façade.

Within the entrance box, the two L-shaped elements are supported by a cantilevered sprayed finish portal frame of 100x200 RHS. The frame is set back from the glazed and metal clad elements, minimising its visual impact and enabling the overall buildup of the metal clad roof and wall to be reduced.

Please refer to the MJP drawings 0701-A-21-201 to 204 for details of the proposed entrance box, and to MJP drawings 0701-A-04-321 & 322 for images of our proposal.

Access

The café will be designed to be fully accessible. Unhindered wheelchair access to the café is provided via the entrance to the South Junction corridor link, which is a key circulation hub within UCL as mentioned above. This also provides level access to the main and wheelchair accessible WCs located along the South Junction link.

Improved lighting, visual manifestation, and contrasting colour schemes will be developed to help people with partial vision navigate the café. The layout of the café has been designed to allow wheelchair users to occupy all the seating areas and access the servery counter within the cafe. Part of the working surface of the servery counter is designed to be not more than 850mm above the floor level, to ensure it is permanently accessible by wheelchair users (as outlined in Approved Document Part M).

Circulation:
Access into the café from the South Junction link is via an outward opening door providing a minimum clear opening width not less than the 825mm as required in Approved Document Part M, for a wheelchair user. A nominal 15mm change in level at the threshold is incorporated as outlined in Designing for Accessibility (Centre for Accessibility Environments 1999). Door pulls and an adjustable closure will be provided to facilitate easy access with a minimum force. The existing corridor has a width of 2000mm (minimum width required in Part M is 1200mm)

Toilets:
There are existing main and wheelchair accessible WCs located along the South Junction link, and unhindered access to these facilities is provided via the café corridor entrance, as noted previously.

Building Services

As there are existing mechanical and electrical services within the café site, these will be adapted to supply the café and there is no requirement for new service connections. The existing haphazard arrangement of M&E services installed at high level will be replaced with a new and simplified central service zone as noted previously, therefore reducing the visual clutter within the space.

For further information on the works proposed to the mechanical, electrical and drainage services, please refer to the Richard Stephens Partnership drawings 856ESK01 to 05 and 856 MSK 01 to 03, and to the Carter Clack drawings 3380-S-01 to 04.

Refuse strategy

The café will be using the existing refuse bins located within a dedicated area on the South Quadrangle boundary, and the University has an established regime of collecting waste materials twice a day from the South Quadrangle. The access from the café to the refuse collection point is via the internal café service entrance (food preparation area entrance) and the side entrance on the south elevation, adjacent to the Concrete Laboratory. This limits the potential waste and visual clutter to the South Wing frontage as the refuse collection point is located away from the café frontage, and the waste materials are regularly collected.

As part of the potential future development of the South Quadrangle, a dedicated refuse enclosure is proposed along the South Gate service zone (refer to MJP Drawing 0701-A-04-300). We note this is for information only, and not included as part of this application.