



ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONDON OFFICE

Mr Gavin Sexton
London Borough of Camden
Development and Control Services
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

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Our ref: P00428971

19 August 2014

Dear Mr Sexton

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001, Circular 08/2009 &
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010
UCL LAWS BENTHAM HOUSE 4-8 ENDSLEIGH GARDENS LONDON WC1H 0EG
Application No 2014/5034/P**

Thank you for your letter of 5 August 2014 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. We do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations.

English Heritage Advice

This application is for internal and external alterations to Grade II Bentham House including the demolition of the adjacent building known as the Gideon Schreier Wing and the erection of a flank and rear extension. This work is proposed in order to meet the accommodation requirements of the UCL Faculty of Laws who occupy the building. The development site is located on the corner of Endsleigh Gardens and Endsleigh Street and within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. English Heritage was pleased to be involved in pre-application discussions regarding these proposals.

Bentham House was built in 1957 for the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, although it has been occupied by the Faculty of Laws since 1965. It is noted for its Art Deco Portland stone exterior featuring carved stone panels and a distinctive corner tower. It is a robust and imposing institutional building which we consider can accommodate a degree of change without significantly harming its architectural, historic and communal values. However we previously advised that the proposed rear extension should be as discreet as possible when viewed from street level. We are therefore pleased to see that the proposed staff room, which is to be located next to the corner tower at fourth floor level, has been pulled back from its original location to reduce its visibility. There may however be some visibility of the lift overrun and we would welcome a reduction in height of this element if possible.



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www.english-heritage.org.uk

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All information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to an information request, unless one of the exemptions in the FOIA or EIR applies.*



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The adjacent Gideon Schreier Wing, which was designed by Richard Seifert and constructed in 1969, is not included in the listing and has not been identified as a significant building in Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. We therefore have no significant concerns with its proposed demolition. We note that the replacement building is intended to reflect the institutional character and floor levels of Bentham House whilst responding to the domestic-scale openings of the adjacent terrace in an attempt to reinforce the urban grain. We welcome the contextual design approach and use of high-quality materials, which we consider would help preserve the character of the conservation area in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

As identified in the list description, Bentham House is also noted for its high-quality and little-altered interiors. Of particular note is its entrance lobby which retains its high-quality finishes and institutional character. The application seeks to create new openings in the lobby area to provide additional circulation space. We understand that these proposals have undergone a number of design revisions following concerns raised by your Council's Design and Conservation Team. We indicated at pre-application stage that the new openings would cause some harm to the significance of this space, and we would encourage additional heritage benefits to be sought to help offset this harm. We are pleased to see that, following our advice, the turnstiles will now be reduced in quantity in the lobby area and set back from the Trade Union engraving, which we consider will enhance the character of this space. We also recognise the additional heritage benefits in the recent conservation work to the moot court.

Recommendation

We consider that the proposals would cause some harm to the significance of the listed building, and the potential visibility of the rear extension from street level could impact on the character of the conservation area. However, in accordance with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, we are content that the application contains sufficient heritage and public benefits (which includes the continued institutional use of the building) to offset this harm. Therefore English Heritage has no significant concerns with this application, and we recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

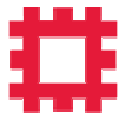
Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).



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Yours sincerely

Alasdair Young

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