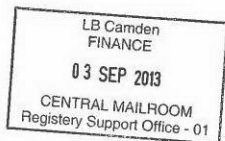


Aysegul Olcar-Chamberlain
Planning Officer
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street

Dear Aysegul Olcar - Chamberlain
Planning Application ref 2013/4415/P



I write to support the application submitted by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) to revitalise the north block of Senate House, as an integral part of the School's project to recreate a single campus for SOAS in the heart of Bloomsbury. I write both as an alumnus of SOAS but also as a resident of Camden, to ask that favourable consideration be given to this request. Not only will this proposed development be excellent for the students and staff of SOAS, but it will also provide a vibrant new purpose for a major part of Senate House which, although it is surely one of the most iconic buildings in London – certainly in Camden – is rather sadly substantially underutilised at present.

As it happens, I have never worked for the University of London, but my career has brought me into Senate House regularly for over 50 years. It is sad to see this heritage building currently lacking a core role. I have twice chaired reviews one purpose of which in each case was to identify future uses for Senate House and each ended without this (admittedly secondary) purpose being achieved. Now finally there is a plan, a funded plan, which will at a stroke, and at no cost to Camden, substantially strengthen SOAS; one of the jewels in London's intellectual crown, in research and in teaching, while giving an exciting new purpose to a major part of a heritage building which, like it or not – I like it a lot – is at the very heart of the capital's intellectual life.

I can think of no reason at all to hesitate about this application, on the contrary, I commend it most strongly and entirely without reservation.

