

Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries
Comments on a current Planning Application - Ref. 9886513

Planning Application Details

Year	2015
Number	7526
Letter	P
Planning application address	30 Gordon Mansions
Title	Miss
Your First Name	Margaret Sandra
Initial	
Last Name	Wheen
Organisation	Resident
Comment Type	Object
Postcode	WC1E7HF
Address line 1	30 Gordon Mansions
Address line 2	Torrington Place
Address line 3	London
Postcode	WC1E7HF
E-mail	
Confirm e-mail	
Contact number	
Your comments on the planning application	Please see my comments in document to be attached.

If you wish to upload a file containing your comments then use the link below

[Objection](#)

About this form

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Issued by	Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries Camden Town Hall Judd Street London WC1H 9JE
Form reference	9886513

Objections to Planning Application for Plant Enclosure: UCL 1-19 Torrington Place

I live in Gordon Mansions in the block which is next door to and overlooks the yard which is the subject of this planning application.

A **OBJECTIONS.** I object to this application for the reasons stated below.

1.0 **This apparently Minor Planning Application for plant hides what is actually a very Major Project with considerable impact locally and I would like to unpack it:**

1.1 **Permission if granted allows a very large square footage at sub-basement and yard levels to be developed as a massive Data Centre for the whole of UCL (all its colleges etc).** This is not just a physically large project but also a “big idea” to centralise in this way with all the attendant security concerns. It would be disingenuous to consider this use to be ancillary to the educational and office uses of these premises. I believe therefore that the applicants should be required to seek permission for change of use (to B8 Storage) so that there can be a more honest appraisal of the local impact of this scheme than the current planning application encourages.

1.2 **The application is for plant set at 35 metres distant from Gordon Mansions Flats, but the basement area (not included in the application) actually adjoins Gordon Mansions flats** so that the machinery and circuitry within it could be running 24/7 at a distance of only a few metres from a resident’s head.

1.3 **The Transformers are 2 transformers which will be close to Gordon Mansions, will run 24/7 and will be noisier than the air-conditioning and without mitigation.**

2.0 **Global warming.** It is disappointing, in terms of global warming, that a way has not been found of using the heat generated by the basement machinery to provide hot water or heating to the building. Also if water were part of the cooling process the air-conditioning noise would be lessened.

3.0 **Noise to Gordon Mansions**

3.1 **56 bedrooms within Gordon Mansions face this yard.** Many of these flats are occupied by large families who use all their bedrooms and will be affected by this 24 hour plant noise in the yard. It would be better for us if the plant could be situated high up, on the roof of the main building, where it will affect us less than putting it below us in an amplifying arena.

3.2 **Noise at Gordon Mansions’ window level is louder than it is in the yard.** The high walls surrounding the yard amplify noise in the yard and deliver it to our windows much louder than it is when you are actually in the yard or in the UCL building. I would like to give an example of this: a year or two ago, an alarm went off in the yard. I found it a very piercing noise and it continued for a long time. So I went down to the security booth in the yard to ask for it to be turned off. Neither the person in the security booth, nor his boss in an office overlooking the yard had been even slightly aware of it.

3.3 Permitted level of noise from air conditioning. I am not happy with the way the applicant has assessed the level of noise that can be allowed from the air conditioning as 40 decibels. 2013 levels are shown in the Acoustic Report to have been 35 decibels. This has jumped up by 2014 (after UCL installed 2 chillers in the yard) and in the Acoustic Report 45 decibels has been taken as the lowest background reading for the purposes of this application. This is not fair. The noise should not have jumped up from 2013 levels. And so **I would like to ask for the acceptable noise level to be set at 30 decibels.** The reality for me is that I have not been able to open my bedroom window at night, since the installation of the 2 chillers, as it is too noisy for sleep.

3.4 Level of noise from sub-station. While there is a proposal to regulate levels of noise from the air conditioning, there is no such proposal for the sub-station which is predicted to emit 75 decibels of noise, that noise being likely to be more annoying than the air-con as it is closer to the flats and tends to be a buzz or hiss. In view of this (and the risk of electro-magnetic radiation) it would seem that the sub-station should be located further away from the flats or even, if possible, underground.

3.5 Noise from double bike rack. I am concerned that the noise of people hoisting bikes into the double bike rack, or even into the single racks, could be irritating particularly early in the morning or late in the evening. We have suffered from restlessness in this yard, in the early mornings particularly, for many years and it would be good if this opportunity could be taken to calm this by means regulated hours of opening and use of the yard. See Suggested Condition 5 below.

4.0 Residents will be concerned about being subjected to electro-magnetic radiation 24/7 from this vast electrical installation both above and below ground, so close to their dwellings.

5.0 Appearance. This is a very utilitarian project for a conservation area and it has been suggested that it could be improved with planting (perhaps on the walls) which would also help to absorb noise and pollution.

B CONDITIONS REQUESTED IF THIS PERMISSION IS GRANTED

1. Permitted air conditioning noise to be set at 30 decibels, ie 5 decibels below 2013 levels of 35 decibels.
2. Noise reduction methods to be applied to the Sub-station.
3. A limit of 3 weeks to be set on the length of time that the emergency generator is allowed to run.
4. Regular maintenance of all plant to be carried out at the required intervals.
5. Hours of opening and of use of the yard to be limited to 8.00am to 6.00pm to reduce noise to residents.
6. UCL to employ a Considerate Contractor. Also for there to be monthly meetings between Gordon Mansions Residents Association and the Contractor so that we will we have some control over the impact of the works on our daily lives.
7. The low wall at the north eastern corner of the yard to be built higher to screen Gordon Mansions from the noise of vehicles visiting the new UCLH building in Huntley Street. [This will only be relevant if the wall actually belongs to UCL and if it is thought that building it up will screen us from noise – all currently being investigated].