

Gordon Mansions Residents Association

Please reply to: Clive Henderson, Chair, Gordon Mansions Residents Association,
5 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HE.

To: Jonathan Markwell, Lead Officer re. DM Members' Briefing Case List for 26/1/2015
Development Management, London Borough of Camden,

Copy: David Peres Da Costa, Planning Officer.

Dear Jonathan Markwell,

**Re: University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HB:
Planning Application ref: 2014/7526/P**

Development Management: Members' Briefing Case List for 26/1/2015

I am writing to you as the Lead Officer for Members' Briefing Case List for this evening's briefing of 26/01/2015, and I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the Delegated Report. Despite our detailed representations and objections in our letter of 9th January 2015, we feel that our objections have not been satisfactorily answered, and we are dismayed that the proposed decision does not contain certain Conditions that we highlighted, especially with regard to:

(1). Noise level: Design Level for the proposed plant should be 30dB, not 40dB:

Although the Report makes much of the visual aspects, for the residents in Flats 17 to 30 (Stair 2) at Gordon Mansions (whose rooms overlook the Yard) the noise impact and noise levels from all the proposed mechanical plant are much more important considerations.

We objected to the proposed 40dB (i.e. 5dB below the Background Noise level) as the Design level, and said that the Design Level at the Residential should be **30dB** (i.e. related to the minimum background level of 35dB as measured in 2013, as in para 5.2.2 of the Applicant's Plant Noise Assessment Report).

The Delegated Report (para 2.8) says that "... the increase in background noise levels is likely to be due to the operation of neighbouring plant on adjoining sites." No evidence is given, and we completely disagree with this surmise. The Report also, incorrectly, quotes us as saying that this increase in noise level is "unaccountable". We did not say this, and in fact we gave the likely reason for this increase in noise over the last year as being UCL's own recently installed 2 no. new chillers in the Yard for the current Data Centre, where the Design Level was set at the 30dB (Planning Permission 24/12/2013: ref. 2013/6364/P).

The change in the Yard has been the installation of these 2 new chillers, and thus it is much more likely that this is the reason for the increased noise level since 2013. In the circumstances, an investigation needs to be carried out to see if this newly installed plant is complying with 30dB Design level.

Our Association's Secretary, Sandra Wheen, a long term resident in one of the flats on Stair 2, has been monitoring the situation. She has told me that after these 2 chillers were installed you could hear an additional "air-conditioning" noise. Since, then, she says that she now has to have her bedroom window (onto the Yard) closed at night to get sleep, whereas before these chillers were installed she was able to have the window open at night.

As in our letter, there are some 54 rooms (most of them bedrooms) in Gordon Mansions (Stair 2 flats), which overlook the Yard and the proposed Plant.

Thus, both from the measurements taken for UCL (in 2013) and from residents' experience, it would seem much more likely that this increase in the noise levels is from the recently installed plant in UCL's Yard.

(2). Noise levels of the 2 no. Transformers:

We are still puzzled by the reference to these Transformers having noise levels of 75dB and 74dB: will the noise of the transformers in any way affect the residential flats ?

Continued to page 2

Re: University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HB - *continued*:

Planning Application ref: 2014/7526/P

(2). Planning Conditions:

We are dismayed that the following Conditions, as requested, have not been included in the proposed planning permission:

(a). A Management Construction Plan:

Ever since UCL took over 1-19 Torrington Place twenty years ago, there has been a long history of noisy works being carried out after hours, including at weekends and public holiday days. Despite assurances, this still occurred last year during the installation of the 2 new chillers in the Yard. Thus, we do not have much faith in UCL's construction management of this site.

UCL have told us that the works for the current proposals will take a year to complete, and cost "more more than several million pounds £, (i.e. this is not a small project).

The work also involves cutting and demolition of concrete. Before Christmas, we experienced the unbearable noise (structure-borne noise) within our flats when some trial concrete cutting was carried out by UCL. The hours of this work needs to be tightly controlled.

This also needs to be seen in the context of other major works being, or about to be, carried out in our immediate vicinity:

- (1). Brook House (opposite), Torrington Place: conversion of offices to Hotel: construction just starting.
- (2). UCL Hospital development in Huntley Street, next to Gordon Mansions: likely start: autumn 2015.
- (3). Camden's West End Project (traffic): Torrington Place Trial in Summer 2015.

- (b). The testing and maintenance of the 2 Emergency Generators** should only occur during normal working hours between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday; (i.e. not weekends and public/bank holidays). The reason being that UCL told us that the generators are noisy, and that there are no noise mitigation steps.

In the circumstances, we would be grateful if the above points (all of which were in our original objection letter) could be drawn to the Panel's attention, and for these aspects to be re-considered.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Henderson,
Chair,
On behalf of Gordon Mansions Residents Association.

Copy: GMRA Committee.
Local Ward Councillors: Cllr Rishi Madlani; Cllr Sabrina Francis.
Professor Michael Arthur, Provost of UCL.
Colin Plank, Director, Property & Accommodation, UCL Estates.

Gordon Mansions Residents Association

Please reply to: Clive Henderson, Chair, Gordon Mansions Residents Association,
5 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HE.

To: Jonathan Markwell, Lead Officer re. DM Members' Briefing Case List for 26/1/2015
Development Management, London Borough of Camden,

Copy: David Peres Da Costa, Planning Officer.

Dear Jonathan Markwell,

**Re: University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HB:
Planning Application ref: 2014/7526/P**

Development Management: Members' Briefing Case List for 26/1/2015

I am writing to you as the Lead Officer for Members' Briefing Case List for this evening's briefing of 26/01/2015, and I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the Delegated Report. Despite our detailed representations and objections in our letter of 9th January 2015, we feel that our objections have not been satisfactorily answered, and we are dismayed that the proposed decision does not contain certain Conditions that we highlighted, especially with regard to:

(1). Noise level: Design Level for the proposed plant should be 30dB, not 40dB:

Although the Report makes much of the visual aspects, for the residents in Flats 17 to 30 (Stair 2) at Gordon Mansions (whose rooms overlook the Yard) the noise impact and noise levels from all the proposed mechanical plant are much more important considerations.

We objected to the proposed 40dB (i.e. 5dB below the Background Noise level) as the Design level, and said that the Design Level at the Residential should be **30dB** (i.e. related to the minimum background level of 35dB as measured in 2013, as in para 5.2.2 of the Applicant's Plant Noise Assessment Report).

The Delegated Report (para 2.8) says that "... the increase in background noise levels is likely to be due to the operation of neighbouring plant on adjoining sites." No evidence is given, and we completely disagree with this surmise. The Report also, incorrectly, quotes us as saying that this increase in noise level is "unaccountable". We did not say this, and in fact we gave the likely reason for this increase in noise over the last year as being UCL's own recently installed 2 no. new chillers in the Yard for the current Data Centre, where the Design Level was set at the 30dB (Planning Permission 24/12/2013: ref. 2013/6364/P).

The change in the Yard has been the installation of these 2 new chillers, and thus it is much more likely that this is the reason for the increased noise level since 2013.
In the circumstances, an investigation needs to be carried out to see if this newly installed plant is complying with 30dB Design level.

Our Association's Secretary, Sandra Wheen, a long term resident in one of the flats on Stair 2, has been monitoring the situation. She has told me that after these 2 chillers were installed you could hear an additional "air-conditioning" noise. Since, then, she says that she now has to have her bedroom window (onto the Yard) closed at night to get sleep, whereas before these chillers were installed she was able to have the window open at night.

As in our letter, there are some 54 rooms (most of them bedrooms) in Gordon Mansions (Stair 2 flats), which overlook the Yard and the proposed Plant.

Thus, both from the measurements taken for UCL (in 2013) and from residents' experience, it would seem much more likely that this increase in the noise levels is from the recently installed plant in UCL's Yard.

(2). Noise levels of the 2 no. Transformers:

We are still puzzled by the reference to these Transformers having noise levels of 75dB and 74dB: will the noise of the transformers in any way affect the residential flats ?

Continued to page 2

Re: University College London, 1-19 Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HB - *continued*:

Planning Application ref: 2014/7526/P

(2). Planning Conditions:

We are dismayed that the following Conditions, as requested, have not been included in the proposed planning permission:

(a). **A Management Construction Plan:**

Ever since UCL took over 1-19 Torrington Place twenty years ago, there has been a long history of noisy works being carried out after hours, including at weekends and public holiday days. Despite assurances, this still occurred last year during the installation of the 2 new chillers in the Yard. Thus, we do not have much faith in UCL's construction management of this site.

UCL have told us that the works for the current proposals will take a year to complete, and cost "more more than several million pounds £, (i.e. this is not a small project).

The work also involves cutting and demolition of concrete. Before Christmas, we experienced the unbearable noise (structure-borne noise) within our flats when some trial concrete cutting was carried out by UCL. The hours of this work needs to be tightly controlled.

This also needs to be seen in the context of other major works being, or about to be, carried out in our immediate vicinity:

- (1). Brook House (opposite), Torrington Place: conversion of offices to Hotel: construction just starting.
- (2). UCL Hospital development in Huntley Street, next to Gordon Mansions: likely start: autumn 2015.
- (3). Camden's West End Project (traffic): Torrington Place Trial in Summer 2015.

- (b). **The testing and maintenance of the 2 Emergency Generators** should only occur during normal working hours between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday; (i.e. not weekends and public/bank holidays). The reason being that UCL told us that the generators are noisy, and that there are no noise mitigation steps.

In the circumstances, we would be grateful if the above points (all of which were in our original objection letter) could be drawn to the Panel's attention, and for these aspects to be re-considered.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Henderson,
Chair,
On behalf of Gordon Mansions Residents Association.

Copy: GMRA Committee.
Local Ward Councillors: Cllr Rishi Madlani; Cllr Sabrina Francis.
Professor Michael Arthur, Provost of UCL.
Colin Plank, Director, Property & Accommodation, UCL Estates.