

Seonaid Carr

Planning and Regeneration
Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8EQ

23 July 2015

Dear Ms Carr,

University College London – Temporary Staircase

Full Planning Application for the provision of new temporary staircase associated with the Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon Street, WC1H 0AH

On behalf of our client, University College London (UCL), we are pleased to submit an application for temporary planning permission for a new temporary staircase associated with the Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon Street, WC1H 0AH.

The planning application is for:

“Installation of new staircase and enclosure to the rear of the Bloomsbury Theatre.”

The Site

The Site is situated to the rear of the Bloomsbury Theatre which is located at 15 Gordon Street in the heart of UCL’s core Bloomsbury Campus. The proposed staircase location is bound by the Grade I Listed University College (also known as the Wilkins Building) to the north, the main body of the Bloomsbury Theatre to the east, a stair tower known locally as the ‘Node’ and the Japanese Garden to the south.

The surrounding area is characterised by buildings owned and occupied by UCL for academic uses. The site is located within Sub Area 3 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Application Context

UCL is embarking on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment of its Bloomsbury campus. The UCL Bloomsbury Masterplan was prepared by Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands in 2010 and adopted by the UCL Council in 2011, following consultation with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. It sets out a vision for the long term development and improvement of the campus over the

next ten to fifteen years, with expected investment of over £500 million. It identifies a range of projects to implement this vision and create the best possible teaching and learning environment including the delivery of the New Student Centre on a vacant site adjacent to the Bloomsbury Theatre.

The New Student Centre will provide high quality student learning space including a variety of different study areas for individual learning and group work. The building will also house a Student Enquiries Centre, which will provide a comprehensive enquiry point for students. The New Student Centre will deliver outstanding facilities for UCL's students and in doing so; will enhance the overall student experience.

To optimise the potential of the New Student Centre site, UCL intends to demolish the non-listed node which currently houses the mechanical plant and escape staircase that services the Bloomsbury Theatre. Planning permission for the relocation of the mechanical plant in the node has been approved and detailed proposals for the New Student Centre, including the demolition of the Node, have been submitted to LB Camden.

Proposals

Following the demolition of the Node the staircase, which serves as both a circulation stair and escape route for the Bloomsbury Theatre, will have to be replaced with a temporary staircase structure.

This temporary staircase is proposed to be adjacent to the Node, to the southwest of the Theatre, and be accessible from both the upper ground floor of the Theatre and the first floor of the Theatre with an exit onto the Japanese for use in emergencies.

The stair enclosure base will be supported on a series of temporary steel supports running up from ground level and Japanese Garden level. These supports may be propped above and below the existing colonnade, where this occurs spreader plates will be used to protect the colonnade and distribute the loads. Other than this the temporary stair will be entirely separated from the Wilkins Building.

The cladding of the staircase will be in translucent polycarbonate panels arranged vertically with integrated aluminium framing. The proposed cladding is often used in permanent construction and has been designed to be neutrally-coloured and translucent.

The roof of the stair enclosure will have a single pitch falling towards the Japanese Garden to reduce the apparent height and to allow for a gutter and downpipe to drain down to the Japanese Garden level. The roof will be clad in a single ply membrane.

The staircase and cladding will be supported from the same demountable structure. The staircase will have an integrated handrail, solid treads and risers, with a carpet tile finish and suitable nosings.

The staircase would need to be operational from the end of January 2016. The latest date the staircase could be required is practical completion of the New Student Centre (subject to planning permission), currently set for June 2018.

Planning Considerations

Camden Core Strategy Policy DP26 – *Managing the Impact of Development on Occupiers and Neighbours* also resists development that will cause harmful effects on the amenity of occupiers and nearby properties. This includes visual outlook, noise and vibration. The proposals' impacts on amenity and noise are discussed in turn below.

Visual Impact

The proposals will have a minimal impact on visual outlook due to the staircase being effectively screened. This approach will ensure that the staircase will not be visible from the Main Quad area, accessed from Gower Street to the west. The proposals would be visible from Gordon Street because the New Student Centre site is largely vacant apart from some temporary construction welfare facilities. The site will become a construction site if planning permission for the Student Centre is granted, at which point the proposals would be largely screened from Gordon Street during this time. On this basis, it is considered that the proposals will not have a harmful visual impact on the amenity of occupiers and nearby properties.

Heritage

The proposals are sited in the setting of a listed building; however, no alternatives are suitable because of the need to maintain access to the Theatre. The design of the staircase and its enclosure are simple but will obscure parts of the Grade I listed building from view; however, this impact will be for a temporary period only whilst the New Student Centre building is completed. This harm would therefore be reversible.

Application Content

The planning application comprises and is supported by the following:

- Application Form and Certificates;
- Site Location Plan ref. 689-NHA-(PL)-401-00;
- Application Drawings:
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-400-00 – Indicative Aerial (not for approval)
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-402-00 – Existing Colonnade Level
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-403-00 – Existing Upper Ground Level
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-404-00 – Proposed Upper Ground Level
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-405-00 – Proposed First Floor Level
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-406-00 – Roof Plan
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-407-00 – Elevation South
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-408-00 – Elevation West
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-409-00 – Section YY
 - 689-NHA-(PL)-410-00 – Section ZZ
- Precedent Image Photograph (not for approval).

A cheque for £195 as payment of the planning application fee has been sent to the Council offices separately.



I would be grateful if you could confirm safe receipt of this application and confirmation that the application can be validated. Should you have any queries please contact Richard Maung (T: 020 7007 3334 E: rmaung@deloitte.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonie Oliva".

Leonie Oliva
Deloitte LLP

cc. J Fletcher – UCL

D Young – UCL

J Eades – Nicholas Hare Architects

C Mason – Nicholas Hare Architects