

Ramsay Hall, 20 Maple Street,
London, W1T 5HB.

Planning Statement

August 2015

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1 Introduction

Introduction

1.1 This planning statement (“the Statement”) has been prepared by Deloitte LLP in support of a planning application submitted on behalf of University College London (“UCL”) for the refurbishment, remodelling and extension of Ramsay Hall (“the Site”).

1.2 UCL is seeking planning permission and advertisement consent for:

“Refurbishment of Ramsay Hall comprising a single storey roof top extension above the Rome block; external alterations associated with remodelling of 5th floor; the creation of a rear glazed walkway extension and infill at ground level; relocation of main access, elevational alterations, installation of new signage and associated works for student accommodation (Sui Generis)”

1.3 This Statement sets out the planning justification for the proposed development and assesses the proposals against the Development Plan for the Site and other relevant material considerations.

Application Documents

1.4 The application includes or is supported by the following documents, which have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority:

Document	Prepared By
Planning application, certificates and notices	UCL and Deloitte
Site Plan (1:1250)	Hawkins Brown
Existing and proposed plans, section and elevations to describe the scheme	Hawkins Brown
Design and Access Statement	Hawkins Brown
Planning Statement	Deloitte
Energy and Sustainability Statement	Parsons Brinckerhoff
Daylight/Sunlight Assessment	GVA
Transport Statement	Iceni
CIL Additional Information Form	Deloitte
Noise Impact Assessment	Parsons Brinckerhoff

Structure of the Planning Statement

1.5 The remainder of the Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 - background to the proposals;
- Section 3 - Site and surrounding area;
- Section 4 - details of the proposed development;
- Section 5 - pre-application consultation process;

- Section 6 - planning policy context;
- Section 7 - key planning considerations of the proposals against planning policy and relevant material considerations;
- Section 8 - summary and conclusions.

2 Background to the Proposals

University College London

- 2.1 UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with over 11,000 staff and nearly 35,000 students. It was ranked fifth in the QS World University Rankings 2014/15 and provides excellence and leadership in teaching and research. The following statistics demonstrate UCL's strength and importance in the higher education sector:
- UCL is the top-rated university in the UK for research strength. (Source: Research Excellence Framework, 2014).
 - UCL is 5th in the World for research strength (Source: QS World Research University Rankings 2014/15).
 - 29 Nobel Prize winners are, or were, students or academics at UCL (Source: The UCL Advantage, 2015).
 - UCL is one of the top two universities in the UK for the number of professors, which means that its students are taught by the most highly qualified experts in their field (Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2011).
- 2.2 UCL's main Bloomsbury campus is located in LB Camden, south of Euston Road, but UCL also owns and occupies a number of properties across the borough and in the neighbouring boroughs of LB Islington and Westminster. The university is embarking on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment of its Bloomsbury campus. This will ensure that UCL provides an estate that meets its strategic vision and facilitates the world leading teaching and research undertaken.
- 2.3 UCL is the largest higher education institute in LB Camden and makes a significant contribution to Camden's local economy. 3% of Camden's economic output produced in 2012/13 was estimated to be supported by UCL and 10,500 jobs in Camden are dependent on UCL (which is equivalent to the employment created by the 11 largest private sector employers in the borough). (Source: Oxford Economics- the impact of UCL, 2014).

UCL's Strategy

- 2.4 UCL has ambitious aspirations for growth over the coming twenty years and has prepared a new strategy for the University to 2034 (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-2034/UCL2034>). This strategy aims to secure and improve on UCL's international standing. A central theme for the vision is for UCL to become "*London's Global University: In London, of London and for London*".
- 2.5 The strategy identifies six 'key enablers' to deliver its vision:
-
- A. "Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities"**
 - B. Valuing our staff and delivering on equality and diversity**
 - C. Financing our ambitions**
 - D. Delivering excellent systems and processes in support of UCL's vision**
 - E. Maintaining a sustainable estate to meet our aspirations**
 - F. Communicating and engaging effectively with the world"**
- 2.6 To facilitate 'enablers' A and E, UCL needs to invest in its facilities and ensure it continues to provide world class facilities for its staff and students. This includes the quality of its student accommodation offer.

- 2.7 To deliver UCL's vision of these key enablers and to respond to growing national and international competition, UCL is embarking on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment of its estate. This includes the investment of well over £500 million to enhance and create new world class facilities. The vision for the long term development and improvement is set out in the UCL Bloomsbury Masterplan (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/masterplan>) (2010).
- 2.8 Student accommodation is not specifically identified in the Bloomsbury Masterplan. However, the quality and diversity of student accommodation is considered as an essential part of a university's offer (as outlined below). The provision of high quality, modern facilities for students close to the main Bloomsbury Campus is therefore critical for UCL to deliver its vision and ensure it maintains its current status as a world leading university.

Importance of student accommodation

- 2.9 Following the increase in tuition fees, students' expectations have significantly increased. Students are increasingly demanding value for money in both the quality and quantity of facilities and the overall student experience. The quality and location of student accommodation is a central pillar of the wider student experience and is therefore regarded as an essential component of UCL's ability to attract high quality students, both from the UK and abroad.
- 2.10 Students' choices of where to live are influenced by access to the teaching, research and social facilities of their university. A recent UCL student survey has highlighted that the most important factor when applying for accommodation is proximity to the UCL campus. 60% of UCL applicants indicated they do not want to be spending more than half an hour travelling to UCL, with only 5% considering a walk of over 20 minutes or a commute including public transport of 40 minutes acceptable.
- 2.11 Student accommodation that is well located to the core campus encourages students to use sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, encourages a strong sense of community and creates a safe and secure environment for students.
- 2.12 UCL offers guaranteed student accommodation provision for all first year undergraduates and first year international post-graduate students with the aim of extending this guarantee to all first year post graduate students. This guarantee is considered as an essential component of UCL's offer to attract the best students, both from the UK and abroad. Other major universities within the UK also offer this guarantee and it is imperative that this guarantee is maintained. This improves the student experience and has a wider positive impact on university life and UCL's global reputation.

UCL's Accommodation Strategy

- 2.13 As set out above, student accommodation is a critical component of the university's offer to attract the best students. UCL is therefore reviewing its student accommodation offer and investing in facilities to ensure they meet the standards and expectations of today's students.
- 2.14 Three quarters of UCL's existing student accommodation is within 10-30 minutes' walk of the UCL Bloomsbury Campus. This is considered to be an important aspect of UCL's accommodation offer. However, much of UCL's existing accommodation stock is outdated and the facilities are below modern standards. It does not presently provide the type of facilities fitting to UCL's global standing in provided world leading teaching and research.
- 2.15 UCL needs to respond to increased international competition and the increase in student expectations. UCL's student accommodation strategy therefore seeks to focus investment in larger, more modern student accommodation within close proximity to the Bloomsbury Campus or which is easily accessible to this by public transport. Through investment into UCL's key assets the university will be able to provide world class student accommodation facilities in close proximity to the Bloomsbury Campus. This is essential to ensure that UCL continues to attract the best students from the UK and abroad.

- 2.16 The alternative to university-owned and operated accommodation is more expensive private sector direct-let accommodation or private rented residential accommodation, which is often poor quality and unregulated.
- 2.17 This planning application is closely aligned with UCL's student accommodation strategy and seeks to ensure that Ramsay Hall provides state of the art facilities that meet the expectations of students.

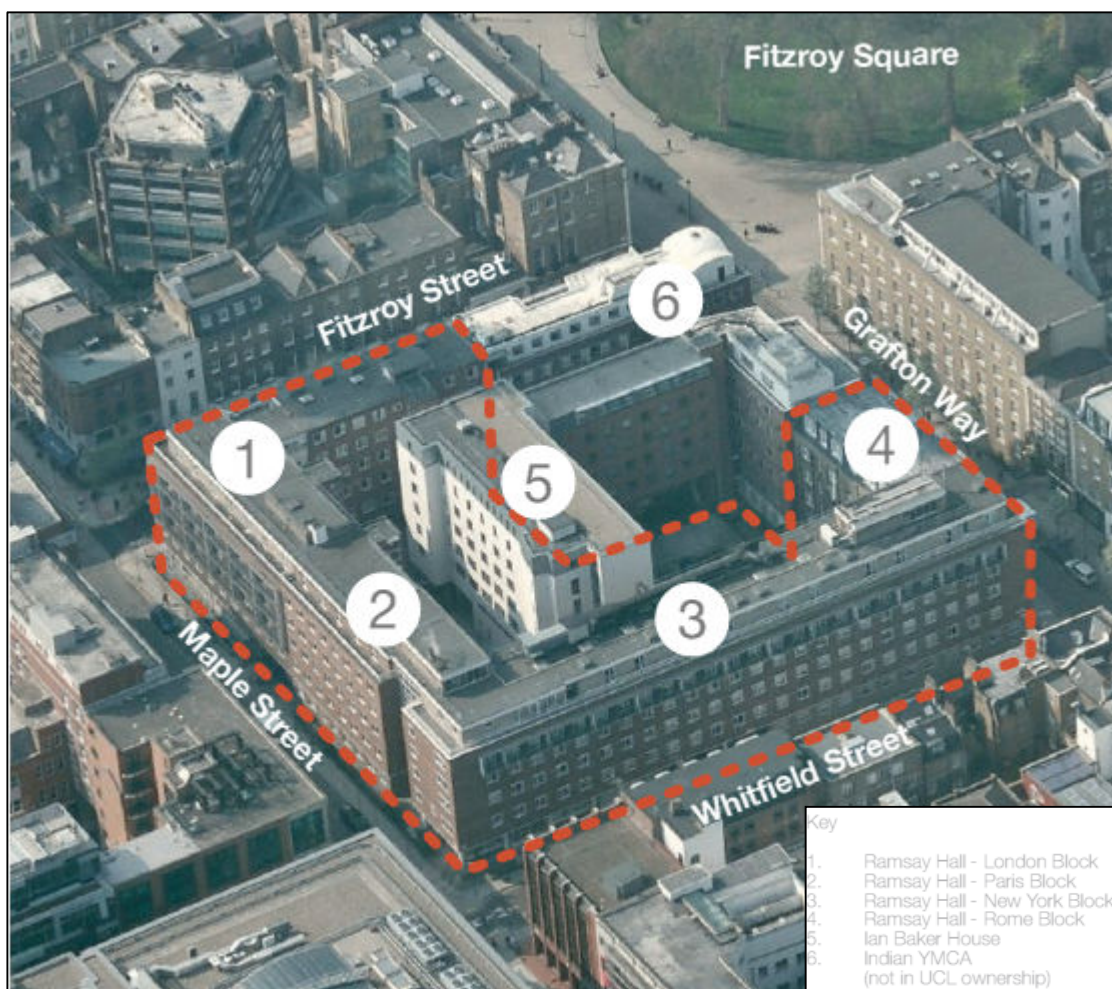
Ramsay Hall

- 2.18 Ramsay Hall is one of UCL's flagship halls of residence for first year undergraduate students. Therefore it is important that it can provide a quality experience for students living and visiting the building.
- 2.19 Ramsay Hall is well subscribed due to its central location. However, as it dates from as early as 1920 in parts, the existing facilities are now comparatively poor quality, which has a negative impact on the overall student experience at UCL. The existing facilities lag behind that provided at nearby private student accommodation.
- 2.20 The supporting Design and Access Statement provides an assessment of the conditions and issues of the existing building. These are also summarised below.
- Lack of identity and sense of arrival;
 - No activity or connection to the street;
 - Poor quality and outdated student bedrooms, which includes a large number of 'twin' bedrooms;
 - Poor quality and limited amount of social and communal space for students;
 - Outdated, tired and dirty facades;
 - No step free access to main entrance;
 - Poor energy efficiency and sustainability;
 - Convoluted access and circulation; and
 - Underused and unattractive courtyard.
- 2.21 Ramsay Hall was constructed over a long period of time, with separate blocks constructed from 1920 to 1982. The building has not undergone a comprehensive refurbishment since its construction. This has resulted in a piecemeal maintenance approach that has left the building outdated with poor quality accommodation and student facilities.
- 2.22 UCL needs to ensure that its flagship student accommodation building provides high quality, modern facilities that meet the expectations of today's students. The building needs to embody UCL's principles and identity of providing world class facilities that enhance the student experience at the university. This planning application therefore seeks a comprehensive refurbishment and remodelling of the existing building to make Ramsay Hall an exemplar for UCL's student accommodation offer. This will help ensure that UCL continues to attract the best students from around the world and maintains its current international standing.

3 Site and Surroundings

The Site and Existing building

- 3.1 The Site is located in the London Borough of Camden and is bounded by Fitzroy Street to the west; Grafton Way to the north; Whitfield Street to the east; and Maple Street to the south. The main entrance is located on Maple Street. The Site is located 340m from the Bloomsbury Campus (a 3-5 minute walk). Please refer to Site Location Plan drawing ref. 1438-DWG-PL-100-A.
- 3.2 Ramsay Hall is owned by UCL. The building currently provides 502 bedspaces for UCL students. This includes 439 single rooms, 1 single studio, 30 twin rooms (double occupancy) and 1 twin studio.
- 3.3 Ramsay Hall is divided into four wings: London (elevation fronts Maple Street and Fitzroy Street), Paris (elevation fronts Maple Street), New York (elevation fronts Whitfield Street) and Rome (elevation fronts Grafton way). There is also a recent infill block in the courtyard of the Site called 'Ian Baker House'. This does not form part of the proposals.
- 3.4 The four buildings occupy the entire block, apart from the Grade II listed Indian YMCA building, which is located at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Grafton Way.

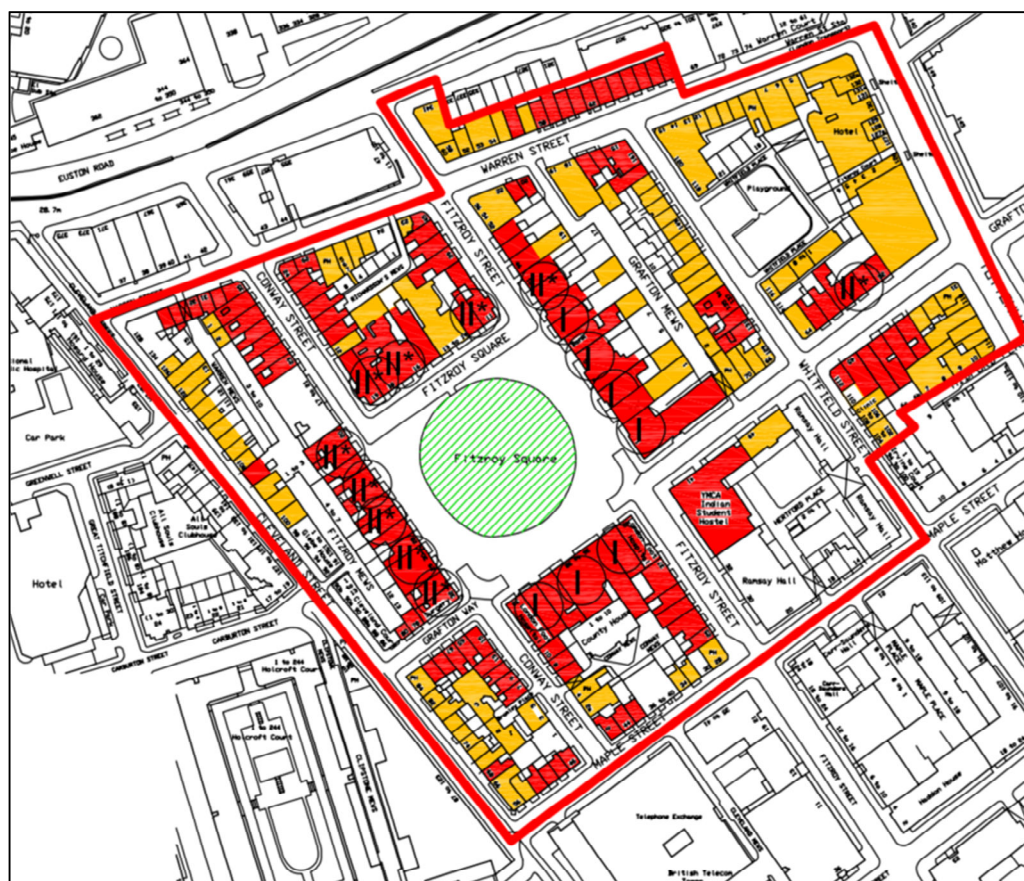


- 3.5 The London, New York and Paris blocks are 5 stories in height and the Rome block is 4 storeys. There are existing railings on the roof of each of the blocks, which are required for access safety precautions. Plant machinery and enclosures are located on the roof. These structures are clearly visible from street level.

- 3.6 There is vehicular access to the courtyard of the building from Maple Street and Whitfield Street and several pedestrian access points across the four blocks.
- 3.7 The building currently accommodates 4 car parking spaces and 32 cycle parking spaces which are located in the rear courtyard.
- 3.8 The Site is located near to several tube stations and bus stops, including Goodge Street, Warren Street, Euston Square and Great Portland Street underground stations. The Site has a PTAL rating of 6b.

The Surrounding Area

- 3.9 There are a range of land uses within the local area, with a mix of residential and commercial building surrounding the Site, as would be expected in this Central London location. The Indian YMCA adjoins onto the Site and provides hostel accommodation. To the east of the Site is Tottenham Court Road, characterised by retail uses.
- 3.10 The Site is located within a sensitive heritage location. It is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and the Grade II listed YMCA adjoins the Site on Fitzroy Street and Grafton Way. There are also a large number of listed buildings in the surrounding area (including Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings). These are highlighted on the Fitzroy Square Heritage Audit map extract below (this is taken from the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal). The Rome block located on Grafton Way is identified as a positive contributor to the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area. The other Ramsay Hall blocks are not identified as making a positive or negative contribution to the Conservation Area.



Key

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Positive Contributors
- Detractors

Planning History of Site

3.11 The Rome Block was constructed in the 1920's. The other three blocks were constructed in phases from the mid-1950s to the 1980s. The infill Ian Baker House was granted planning permission (2005/5457/P) in April 2006. The planning history table below demonstrates there have been no other major planning consents since these blocks were constructed.

Reference number	Description of development	Decision
Ref: P9601855	Erection of a new site security room adjacent to main vehicular entrance	Permission granted on 15-08-1996.
Ref: PS9604229	Erection of security gates	Permission granted on 16-01-1997.
Ref: 2006/1142/P	Installation of new air handling equipment on the roof	Permission granted on the 20-06-2006.
Ref: 2006/3310/P	Replacement of existing crittal windows including the installation of new louvres, replacement of one window to a door on the Fitzroy Street elevation within basement lightwells fronting Maples Street, Fitzroy Street and in the courtyard area of halls of residence building'	Permission granted on 13-09-2006.
Ref: 2006/5842/P	Installation of new staircase in lightwell, replacement gates and railings on the Maple Street elevation and new hoist in lightwells, new gates to replace railings on the Fitzroy Street elevation'	Permission granted on the 22-03-2007.
Ref: 2008/5428/P	Alterations including a new window at Rome Block and installation of an access ramp in London Block'	Permission granted on the 06-02-2009.
Ref: 2010/2674/P	Alterations to provide student accommodation at basement level to Rome Block (located on Grafton Way) to replace existing computer rooms'	Permission granted on the 14-07-2010.
Ian Baker House, 1-2 Hertford Place Ref: 2005/5457/P	The erection of an eight storey building to provide 98 bedrooms for student accommodation and associated landscaping and car parking area within existing internal courtyard area following demolition of the existing 2 storey office building.	Permission granted on the 25-04-2006.

The Indian YMCA

3.12 The adjacent Grade II listed Indian YMCA is seeking to create additional floorspace and expand the building. Planning consent for three extensions was originally secured in 2010. The consent elapsed in 2013 (after three years) and a new planning and listed building consent was secured in 2014. The YMCA consent is

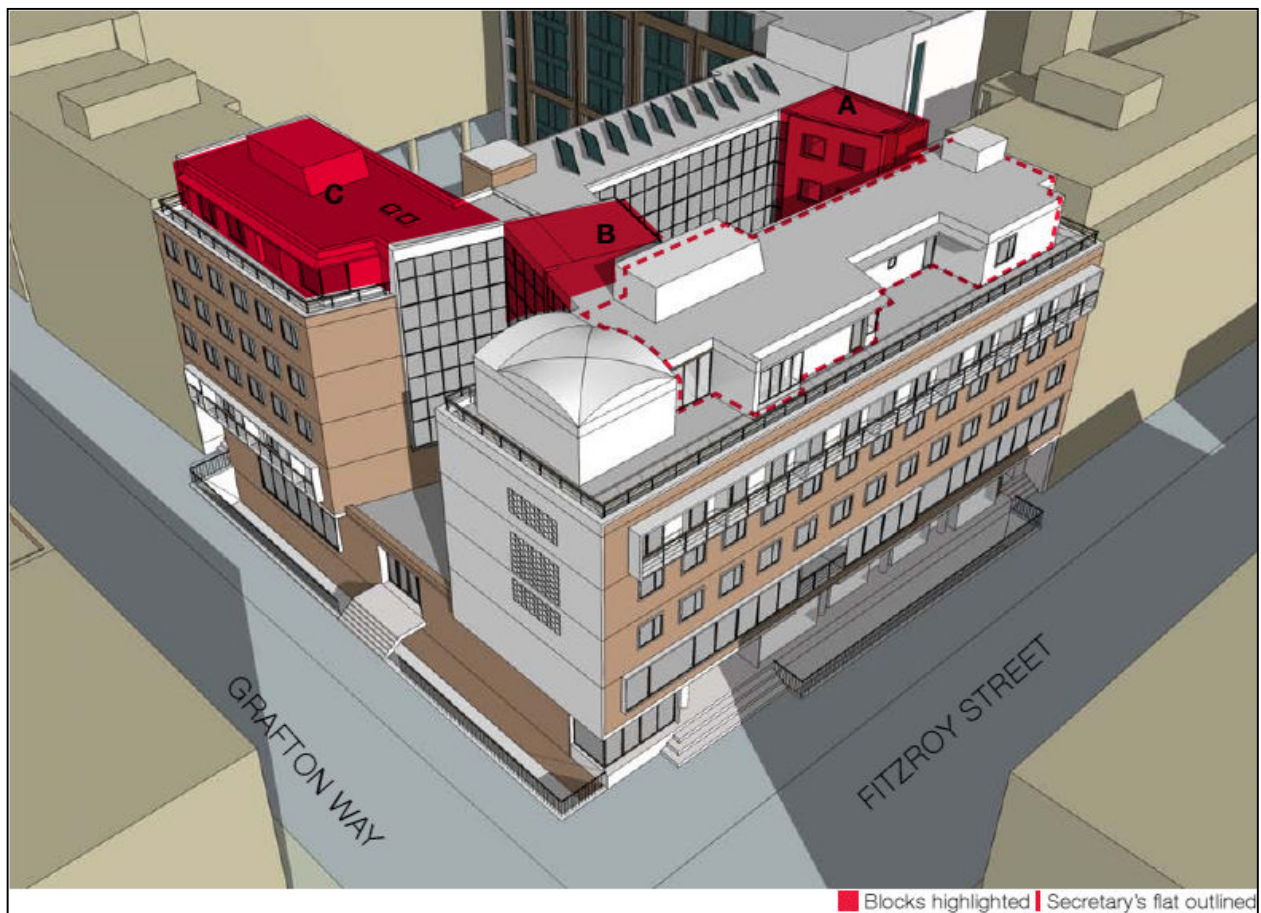
pertinent to this planning application as the extension adjoins the Site. Further details of the planning consents are therefore set out below for reference.

Planning Reference 2009/4924/P and 2009/4925/L

3.13 Planning and listed building consent was granted on 1 July 2010 for:

“Erection of five-storey rear extension with internal courtyard, single storey front extension at fifth floor level, and installation of six solar panels at roof level to create 11 new hostel rooms to existing Hostel (Sui Generis)”.

3.14 An extract from the supporting Design and Access Statement prepared by Levitt Bernstein is included below. This illustrates the three extensions. Extension ‘C’ seeks to extend the fifth floor of the block that adjoins the Rome building. This consent elapsed on 1 July 2013.



Planning Reference 2014/3313/P and 2014/3378/L

3.15 Planning and listed building consent was granted on 12 November 2014 for:

“Erection of five-storey rear extension within internal courtyard, enlargement of existing four-storey link structure, and single-storey roof extension at 5th floor level including installation of 6 solar thermal panels at roof level to create 15 new hostel rooms to existing Hostel (Class Sui Generis).”

3.16 The design and principle of the Block ‘C’ extension was consistent with the 2010 consent. The extension is considered further in Section 6 of this Statement.

4 The Proposals

Overview

- 4.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Hawkins Brown.
- 4.2 The proposals seek to upgrade and modernise Ramsay Hall into a state of the art hall of residence within 3-5 minutes of the Bloomsbury Campus. It is proposed that UCL's flagship halls of residence undergoes a comprehensive refurbishment to respond to student demands and deliver the type of accommodation and facilities that is fitting to a world class university.
- 4.3 The proposals are predominantly a comprehensive refurbishment of the existing building, but include the following:
- Internal refurbishment of the building and revised internal layout to provide better quality student accommodation.
 - Relocation of the main entrance to the corner of Maple Street and Whitfield Street. This will include an element of glazing and allow a visual connection to the street.
 - Repair of the existing brick facades, and replacement windows and balustrades.
 - Remodelling and new metal cladding to the existing fifth floor and roof.
 - Ground floor extension within the rear Courtyard to create a glazed link.
 - Roof extension above the Rome Block on Grafton Way, which will be consistent with the recently approved YMCA extension.
 - Creation of an energy efficient building, which significantly reduces water usage and carbon emissions.
 - Improved internal circulation and legibility of the building.
 - A new landscaped rear courtyard.
- 4.4 The proposals result in 737sqm GIA (or 769sqm GEA) of additional floorspace. An extension is proposed above the Rome block (to provide 176 sqm (GIA)). The majority of additional floorspace is provided within the courtyard on the ground floor to create the glazed link (for accessibility and student social facilities).
- 4.5 Please see a full floorspace schedule below.

EXISTING				
	GEA	GIA	Bed Spaces	Bed Rooms
	sqm	sqm		
Floor				
Roof	0.0	0.0		
5	1289.0	1185.4	60	58
4	1828.5	1672.0	100	93
3	1837.8	1695.1	99	93
2	1843.2	1698.7	98	94
1	1843.2	1702.6	92	86
0	1699.2	1550.7	43	37
B1	1927.3	1762.6	10	10
	12268.2	11267.2	502	471

PROPOSED				
	GEA	GIA	Bed Spaces	Bedrooms
	sqm	sqm		
Floor				
Roof	0.0	0.0		
5	1519.0	1361.6	70	67
4	1837.6	1685.0	92	92
3	1837.8	1695.1	92	92
2	1843.2	1698.7	92	92
1	1843.2	1702.6	92	92
0	2296.0	2155.0	46	44
B1	1860.7	1706.4	10	9
	13037.4	12004.5	494	488

UPLIFT				
	GEA	GIA	Bed Spaces	Bedrooms
	sqm	sqm		
Floor				
Roof	0.0	0.0		
5	230.0	176.1		
4	9.1	13.0		
3	0.0	0.0		
2	0.0	0.0		
1	0.0	0.0		
0	596.8	604.3		
B1	-66.7	-56.2		
	769.2	737.3	-8	17

Figure 1: Floorspace Schedule (Source: Design and Access Statement)

4.6 Each aspect of the proposal is outlined in further detail below and should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement.

Accommodation quality

- 4.7 Ramsay Hall currently provides 502 bedspaces. This includes 440 single occupancy bedspaces (including one studio flat) and 62 double occupancy bedspaces (including 1 double studio). The vast majority of the bedspaces are 'sink only'. As set out in Section 2, students now expect much better quality facilities and the type of accommodation demanded has changed. There is very limited demand for twin bedrooms and UCL needs to increase its provision of ensuite facilities to respond to the student accommodation offered from private developers and other universities.
- 4.8 The internal reorganisation of Ramsay Hall provides an opportunity for UCL to upgrade its student accommodation offer and ensure it meets the expectations of today's students. The proposals seek to significantly increase the number of single ensuite rooms (to 19 bedspaces) and sharing cluster facilities (to 184 bedspaces) and reduce the number of twin bedrooms (to 6 bedspaces). Please see the accommodation schedule within the Design and Access Statement for further details.
- 4.9 The design team has developed a series of bedroom typologies that work within the existing constraints of Ramsay Hall. This will significantly enhance both the quality and diversity of accommodation offered. Due to the change in typology the proposals will result in a net reduction in bedspaces (and therefore students on-site), but an increase in student bedrooms.

	Bedrooms	Bedspaces
Existing	471	502
Proposed	488	494
Difference	+17	-8

4.10 The existing accommodation also lacks sufficient support facilities (WCs, showers, kitchens). A key driver of the project has been to provide better quality living clusters with high quality shared kitchens, washing facilities and the provision of study bedrooms.

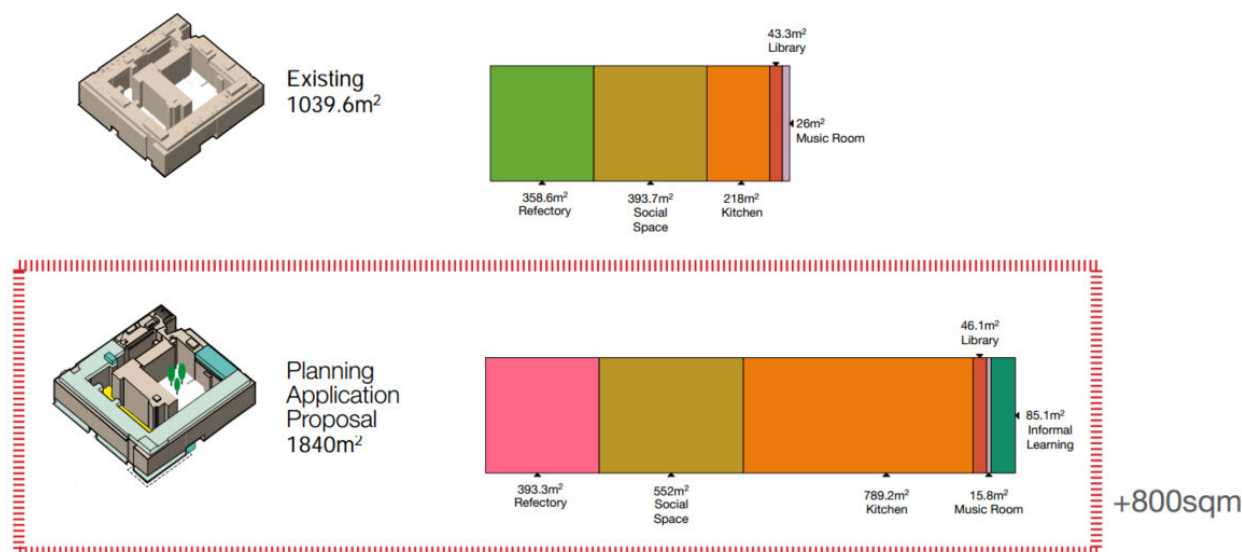
New student social facilities

4.11 The existing building suffers from a severe lack of quality spaces for students to interact and socialise in. UCL acknowledges the need to provide high quality student facilities within its flagship student accommodation hall. This is a key driver of the proposals.

4.12 The proposals seek to create a more integrated and inclusive community for the building's residents. Key social spaces to be provided within the proposed refurbishment include:

- Significant increase in communal kitchen/ dining area space per bedroom cluster (increase of 571 sqm from the existing).
- Provision of new lounge areas within the new glazed link.
- A music room.
- Informal learning spaces.
- Games area.
- Library.
- Landscaped courtyard.

4.13 The proposals will result in the addition of over 800 sqm of additional social and communal internal floorspace for students. Please see a summary below.



Relocation of main entrance

4.14 The existing entrance is very unwelcoming and does not relate well to the existing building. It fails to create a sense of arrival or identity for the building. The re-configuration of the entrance and reception of the building is therefore considered one of the most important aspects to help reinvigorate the halls and provide a strong identity and cohesive student community.

4.15 The main entrance to the building is proposed to be re-located to the corner of Maple Street and Whitfield Street. This location better relates to the existing building and is better situated towards the UCL main Bloomsbury Campus to the east. The design and appearance of the entrance has been carefully considered and is explained in detail in the supporting Design and Access Statement.

- 4.16 The new reception will include a generous lobby space that acts as a social gathering place. A timber bench is proposed along the perimeter of the space creating a series of seating booths that lead to the reception desk. It also includes bookable glazed meeting rooms.

Partial recladding and external works

- 4.17 The existing elevations are considered to provide a well-balanced composition with strong repeating window units and interesting key features. The intention is therefore to retain the existing envelope as much as possible. However, there is an opportunity to enhance and upgrade the elevations in areas and address key access and frontage issues.
- 4.18 The supporting Design and Access Statement sets out in detail all the modifications proposed at the 'base', 'middle' and 'top' of the building. This includes partial re-cladding, replacement of windows and balustrades (in areas), remodelling of the 5th floor (discussed below), removing the redundant plant enclosures from the roof and streamlining the perimeter railings.

Reconsolidation of 5th floor

- 4.19 One of the key aims of the Ramsay Hall refurbishment is to improve the visual quality of the existing building and create a holistic identity and appearance for the Halls. Enhancing the existing messy roofscape is considered key to delivery of this aim. The proposals include the removal of a significant amount of redundant plant enclosures and unsightly structures on the roof, which are visible from street level. The existing 5th storey is also constructed from brick and poorly relates to the middle and lower proportions of the building.
- 4.20 The proposals include the remodelling of the 5th floor with a new design approach and material that better relates to the remainder of the building. The existing structure is proposed to be retained and only the brick envelope is removed to be replaced with zinc cladding. The massing is therefore broadly consistent with the existing building and will not increase the visual impact of the building. The design approach is explained in detail in the supporting Design and Access Statement and within Section 6.

Extension above the Rome Block

- 4.21 The existing Rome block is one storey lower than the other blocks within Ramsay Hall and also the adjacent YMCA building. There is therefore an opportunity to provide additional student accommodation above the existing building to replace some of the bedspaces lost through the internal reconfiguration of the building.
- 4.22 The proposed design has been informed through a variety of options studies and the massing has been minimised and set-back to reduce any visual impact. The design is outlined in the supporting Design and Access Statement and Section 6.

Glazed Link

- 4.23 A new glazed link is proposed on the ground floor to connect and simplify the level access to all of the blocks of Ramsay Hall. Within the glazed link, a series of lounge and informal areas are proposed. This will provide a new key social space area for the entire building.
- 4.24 The roof of the new glazed link is proposed to hold a green sedum roof. This will help enhance the site's biodiversity, reduce surface water run-off and create an improved visual outlook for residents. The green roof coverage is approximately 520 sqm and considered to be a benefit of the scheme.

Landscaped courtyard

- 4.25 The existing courtyard space is of poor quality and is greatly underused. This area can help perform a key role in the knitting together of the blocks and become a social destination of the halls of residence.

- 4.26 The planning application seeks to re-landscape the courtyard and introduce an element of both soft and hard landscaping. This will include new planting, seating and paving. The courtyard is set at the same level as Ian Baker House (between ground and basement) and will help tie together the varying levels and connection between the blocks.
- 4.27 The design of the courtyard has been informed through consultation with the YMCA and a planting buffer zone is proposed to provide privacy to the neighbouring property. Emergency access and a means of escape through the Ramsay courtyard for YMCA residents shall also be maintained.

Car and Cycle Parking

- 4.28 Ramsay Hall currently contains 4 car parking spaces and 32 cycle parking spaces. The proposals do not provide any car parking provision (car free development) and seek to retain the existing cycle parking provision (32 cycle parking spaces). This approach is discussed further in Section 6.

5 Pre-application Consultation

Pre-application consultation

- 5.1 The proposals have been informed through an extensive pre-application consultation process. The scale and design of the final scheme has significantly evolved following early engagement to ensure the building responds to the sensitive heritage context.
- 5.2 The pre-application consultation process has involved 4 meetings with LB Camden planning and design officers, a consultation meeting with the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal Committee (BCAAC) and follow up correspondence, as well as a meeting with the owners of the neighbouring YMCA building. The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and the Charlotte Street Association have also been informed of the proposal via email and offered a follow up meeting. A brief summary of the pre-application discussions is set out below.

Pre-application meeting 1 – 13 March 2014

- 5.3 In March 2014, UCL met with LB Camden planning officers to discuss initial proposals for a more significant proposal which included a larger extension to Ramsay Halls. The feedback is summarised below:
- The principle of adding up to 86 bedrooms (for a larger proposal) was considered acceptable in planning use terms.
 - The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area is considered one of the most preserved pieces of conservation area anywhere south of Euston Road. Any development proposals which seek to push beyond the existing height and scale will need to demonstrate that there would be no harm to the Conservation Area and, where possible, an enhancement through high quality design.
 - The proposed ground floor works and relocation of the main entrance to the corner of Maple Street and Whitfield Street were supported in principle.

Pre-application meeting 2 – 3 July 2014

- 5.4 Alternative options for the extension of Ramsay Hall were explored by the design team and presented to LB Camden. The feedback is summarised below:
- The principle of adding a single storey on the Rome block and coming forward to meet the proposed adjoining line of the YMCA extension was considered likely to be acceptable.
 - An exemplar design would be required if any extension is proposed above the other blocks of Ramsay Hall. Further separation of form would be required, with the use of setbacks and reduced height and massing to create sky views above the setback link.

Pre-application meeting 3 – 10th February 2015

- 5.5 The proposals were significantly reduced in scale and the proposed roof top extension was omitted from all blocks apart from the Rome block. This was due to the cost of construction and the planning impacts associated with a wider extension. The principle of the development was therefore broadly accepted by LB Camden and the remaining pre-application meetings focused on the detailed design of the proposals. The feedback is summarised below:
- Officers were supportive of the overall design principles and scale of development.

- A views analysis would be required for the Rome block extension and consideration as to whether a mansard roof would be appropriate. The rear elevation of the Rome block also needed to be considered in further detail.
- Detailed discussions took place regarding the design and material of the remodelled 5th floor. Officers requested that a number of materials are explored and that further articulation is required to add visual interest and break up the massing.
- Officers acknowledged the low usage of the existing cycle parking spaces. The re-provision of the current cycle parking spaces within a re-landscaped courtyard was considered acceptable in principle.

Consultation with the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC): 25th March 2015

5.6 The Site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) however, review and comment on applications in this area and were therefore consulted during a walk around the site. Members of the BCAAC expressed the following views:

- Supportive of the principles of the scheme to upgrade and refurbish the building. It was considered that the scheme could be a significant enhancement to the existing building.
- Welcomed the architectural studies undertaken for the proposed entrance and considered that the existing columns should be retained if possible.
- Considered the removal of the 5th floor railings would improve the building's appearance. Supported the articulation of the remodelled 5th floor to break up the massing, but considered the height should be minimised as much as possible.
- Supported the use of metallic materials on the 5th floor, but suggested the colour should not be too dark.
- Acknowledged the YMCA consent for the 5th floor extension and understood the Rome block would be broadly consistent with the consented building line.

Pre-application Workshop 4: 16th April 2015

5.7 Officers supported all the design principles, but requested that the height of the remodelled 5th floor and Rome block was minimised. A further detailed views analysis was also requested.

Pre-application subsequent correspondence

- 5.8 The massing of the remodelled 5th floor and Rome block was further reduced. The re-consolidated 5th floor is now consistent with the existing massing and aligns with the existing brickwork cladding. There is a small rise in massing at the corner to announce the street corner and identify the social use in this section of the building. Please see the supporting Design and Access Statement which includes wireline views to accurately illustrate the comparison of existing and proposed.
- 5.9 A detailed study was submitted to LB Camden demonstrating that a mansard roof would result in a very awkward relationship with the surrounding blocks. The YMCA planning consent also included a vertical extension, which is typical in this area.
- 5.10 The final feedback from LB Camden officers considered that all their previous concerns had been fully addressed and that the current proposal represented a sensitive solution that would enhance the existing building.

YMCA meeting: 23rd July 2015

- 5.11 UCL met with the neighbouring Indian YMCA on 23rd July 2015 to inform them of the proposals. The YMCA was supportive of the proposals to refurbish and upgrade the building.
- 5.12 Further details regarding the phasing and construction works were requested, which have subsequently been provided. It was agreed that further dialogue between the two bodies is required given the likely cumulative impacts of their respective development projects.

6 Planning Considerations and Justifications

6.1 This section considers the scheme against the Development Plan for the area and other relevant material considerations.

Development Plan

6.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Local Development Framework (LDF), unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.3 The Development Plan for the area comprises:

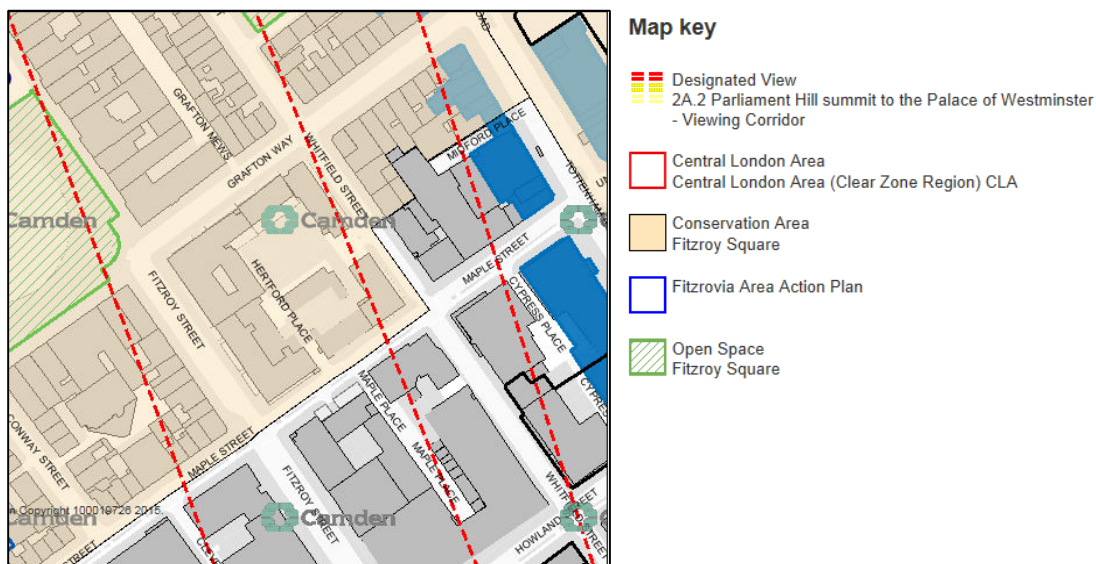
- Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) (2015);
- LB Camden Core Strategy (2010);
- LB Camden Development Management Policies (2010); and
- Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014).

6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance, and Greater London Authority Housing SPG are material considerations.

Planning Policy Designations

6.5 The site has the following specific planning policy designations on the LB Camden planning policy proposal map (see extract below). It is:

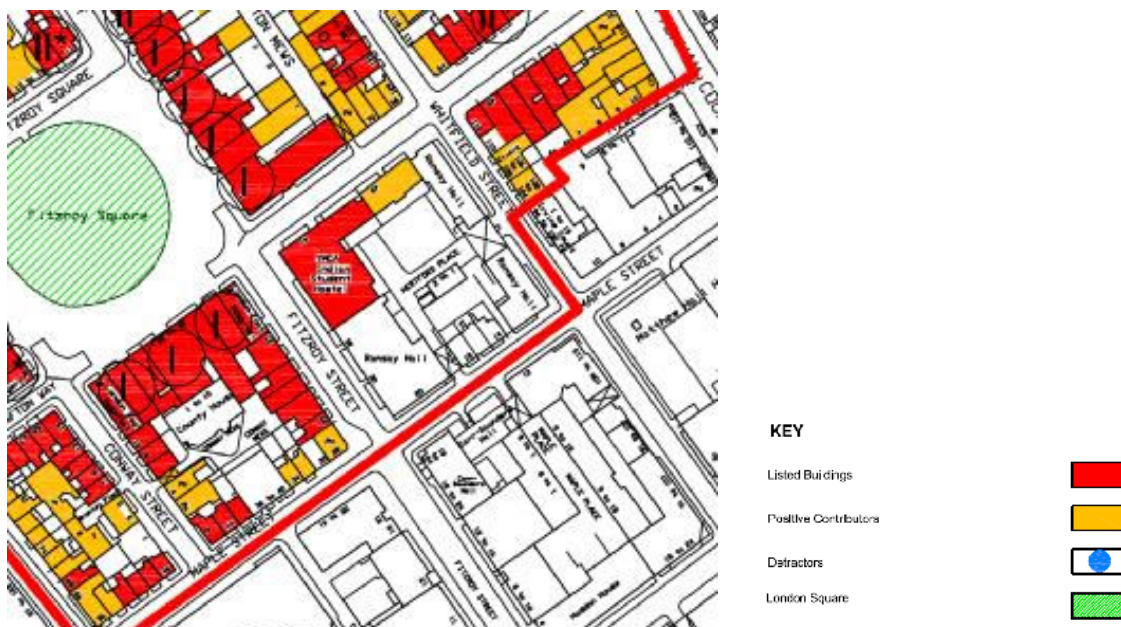
- Within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area. The Rome Block is identified as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area in the Fitzroy Square Heritage Audit.
- Within the Central London Area.
- Within the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan boundary.
- Within the Parliament Hill to Palace of Westminster Strategic Viewing Corridor.



Principle of Development

- 6.6 The proposals seek to upgrade and refurbish UCL's flagship student accommodation at Ramsay Hall. The proposals include the internal reconfiguration of the building, external works, a minor extension above the Rome block and the creation of a new glazed link within the rear courtyard. The driver of the proposals is to enhance the quality and diversity of UCL's student accommodation offer in line with its accommodation strategy.
- 6.7 Policy CS10 supports and promotes the importance of higher education in LB Camden. The principle of investing in and improving higher education facilities (and supporting facilities, such as UCL owned and run student accommodation) is therefore supported.
- 6.8 The Greater London Authority Housing SPG also emphasises that academic estates should be enabled so they can manage their estates more effectively in order to *"enhance their offer, reduce costs, and contribute to wider strategic objectives for London."* This would, *"enable academia to contribute further to promotion of London as a world city as well as a centre of academic excellence"*. The provision of a world class student accommodation offer to enhance the wider student experience is therefore closely aligned with this guidance.
- 6.9 The proposals do not result in the intensification of the student accommodation use. The proposals include 17 additional bedrooms, but result in the net loss of 8 student bedspaces due to the change in room typology and the provision of a significant increase in student facilities. The proposals focus on providing better quality accommodation rather than simply maximising the quantity of accommodation.
- 6.10 The principle of the use is therefore established and accepted. The principle to create better quality accommodation and a greater variety of room typologies and layouts is also supported by criterion j) of Policy DP9.

Design and Heritage



- 6.11 The Site is located in the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and adjacent to a number of listed buildings, such as the YMCA (please see Fitzroy Square Heritage Audit map below). The Rome block of Ramsay Hall is identified as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area on the map, but is not specifically referred to in the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Appraisal (FSCAA).
- 6.12 With the exception of the Rome block (1920's), Ramsay Hall is a primarily modernist building constructed in phases from the mid-1950's to the 1980's. Parts of the building are now worn or degrading. The building has

not undergone a comprehensive refurbishment since it was built and now requires significant investment to bring the facilities and fabric of the building back up to modern standards.

- 6.13 Policy DP25 and Policy CS14 require development to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas and their settings. Development that would cause harm to the setting of a Conservation Area will be resisted.
- 6.14 Through the use of minor design interventions the proposals seek to enhance the external appearance of the building; respond to the existing character; and bring the elevational composition of the blocks together as a whole. This design approach will ensure that the building portrays a better unified identity and design that appropriately sits within and enhances the Conservation Area.
- 6.15 The character and significance of the Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings has been carefully considered at an early design stage. The proposal's impact on the setting of the heritage assets has been tested extensively during the design process and there has been close engagement with Camden planning and design officers and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC). Please see section 5.
- 6.16 It is considered that the submitted scheme provides a sensitive and considered approach that responds to the character and materiality of the Conservation Area whilst ensuring that UCL's flagship accommodation building responds to growing student expectations and provides world class facilities. Particular aspects of the proposal are discussed in turn below and this should be read alongside the supporting Design and Access Statement.

New entrance

- 6.17 As set out in Section 4, a number of alterations are proposed to the ground floor elevations.
- 6.18 The relocation of the main entrance will improve access into the building and will help create a unified identity for the building. The entrance and reception will be re-located to a more prominent corner on Maple Street/ Whitfield Street. The appearance of the entrance has been carefully considered and informed by a number of design studies.
- 6.19 The proposal has adopted architectural cues from the nearby YMCA entrance and it retains and reveals the existing structural columns, which are considered to form part of the building's character and rhythm. The proposed full height glazing displays the reception space and the active ground floor uses within the building to create a public face and image of Ramsay Halls.
- 6.20 The proposal includes the creation of a canopy and new signage above the entrance. The signage is proposed to be neon lit. Policy CS14 and Policy DP24 seek to ensure the high quality design of all buildings in Camden. Detailed guidance for advertisements, signs and hoardings is contained within CPG1 and states that 'satisfactory advertisements' should consider the character and design of the property, the appearance of the surroundings and the external fabric of the building.
- 6.21 The proposed 'Ramsay Hall' sign seeks to raise awareness of the building and create a stronger identity for the student halls. It has been carefully designed to complement the character of the building and ensure it does not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area. The size, positioning, design and materials of the sign are considered appropriate for this location and use of the building.
- 6.22 The proposed new entrance is situated within the 'Central London Area' and at the edge of the Conservation Area, opposite a number of modern office buildings. Maple Street is not a particularly sensitive part of the Conservation Area and the installation of appropriate signage that compliments the character of Ramsay Hall is considered appropriate and in accordance with planning policy.
- 6.23 Details of the location and total size of the sign have been provided within the Design and Access Statement. However, the detailed design of the sign has not yet been developed and the approach to its illumination has

not been confirmed. This application seeks advertisement consent for the sign, but it is proposed that a condition is attached to any decision notice reserving the requirement for further details to be approved at a later date.

Remodelling of 5th floor

- 6.24 The existing 5th floor poorly relates to the lower levels of the building. The roof also contains a number of large redundant plant enclosures, which are visible from ground level and detract from key views within the Conservation Area.
- 6.25 The proposals seek to remodel the 5th floor and provide a rationalised and enhanced design solution. The existing structure and massing will be retained and a new lightweight zinc cladding material is proposed. The design and treatment of the 5th floor has been carefully considered in consultation with Camden design and conservation officers.
- 6.26 A number of design studies have informed the articulation of the re-modelled 5th floor to ensure the elevation adds visual interest without becoming too visible in key views within the Conservation Area. The height has been minimised and the proposed massing is now consistent with the existing massing as demonstrated in the wire line views in the supporting Design and Access Statement. The massing has been slightly raised at the building's corner to help create a subtle feature above the entrance to Ramsay Hall.
- 6.27 Light coloured zinc cladding is proposed for the remodelled 5th floor. The light zinc 'top' will create an appropriate hierarchical composition to the stronger brick middle and base below. Design studies with alternative materials have been tested, such as using dark zinc, brick and bronze. The brick was considered to be too visually heavy and the dark zinc and bronze was considered to be too dominant and undermine the sub-servient nature of the composition of the façade.

Rome block extension

- 6.28 The Rome block is identified as a positive contributor to the Conservation Area and is located adjacent to the Grade II listed YMCA building. The existing building consists of four storeys. The adjacent listed YMCA building is 5 storeys and has planning consent to bring the set-back 5th storey forward. The adjacent New York block is also 5 storeys in height.
- 6.29 As summarised in Section 3, planning and listed building consent was secured in 2010 and subsequently in 2014 for the extension of the adjacent YMCA building. This included a single-storey roof extension at 5th floor level.
- 6.30 The 2014 officer's report states that the proposed roof extension is considered to be of an acceptable design, and has acceptable impact on the listed building and the character of the conservation for the following reasons:
- The proposal is consistent with the barrel form of the roof extension to the original building on the site.
 - The proposal would maintain an adequate setback so as not be readily visible when viewed from the street.
 - The area is characterised by roof extensions at the same level.
 - The proposed materials are appropriate for this building.
- 6.31 The proposed Rome block extension is consistent with these design principles. The extension is set back by 970 mm; has been minimised in height; is consistent with the YMCA extension and other extensions that characterise this area; and is proposed in an appropriate light coloured zinc material (which will appear sub-servient to the lower levels).

- 6.32 The design of the extension has been carefully considered with Camden conservation and design officers. A traditional mansard roof is not considered appropriate due to the awkward relationship with the adjacent buildings, which all have vertical building lines. The proposed vertical Rome extension is considered to continue the language and materiality across the 5th floor of Ramsay Hall and help to create a coherent and unified building. The YMCA planning and listed building consent also included a vertical roof extension.
- 6.33 The height of the extension has been minimised following numerous design studies to help reapportion the whole elevation's composition and ensure a traditional hierarchy where the top floor is perceived as subservient to the lower levels.
- 6.34 The rear of the extension is proposed to be zinc and has also been carefully considered. The introduction of brick on this elevation would create an uncomfortable design solution with contrasting bricks types and colours (due to contrasting age). Please see the supporting Design and Access Statement for further details.

Summary

- 6.35 The proposals have been carefully considered with extensive consultation with Camden planning and design officers and the BCAAC. Ramsay Hall has never undergone a comprehensive refurbishment and has a tired appearance, which is degrading in areas.
- 6.36 The proposals seek to reveal and enhance the existing characteristics and rhythms of the building, whilst sensitively remodelling and altering areas to ensure it is fit for modern use. The elevations and choice of materials have been informed by detailed design studies and the final design solution is considered to be a sensitive and successful response that will create a unified identity for the building that integrates within and enhances the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.37 The proposals are considered to fully accord with Policy DP25 and Policy CS14.

Energy and Sustainability

- 6.38 The proposals are inherently sustainable as they involve the refurbishment and upgrade of an existing building rather than the creation of a new building.
- 6.39 The current energy efficiency of Ramsay Halls is very poor. This is due to the age of the building, the materials used in construction and because the building has never undergone a comprehensive refurbishment. The building currently has total CO₂ emissions of 69.7 kg/sqm, which represents 874.66 tonnes of CO₂ per annum.
- 6.40 Improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of the building has been a key driver of the proposals. The design team has carefully considered all options to ensure the design achieves the optimum energy performance. The supporting Energy and Sustainability Statement provides a detailed analysis of the energy efficiency measures proposed and how sustainability is central to the development. A summary of the measures is outlined below:
- New highly insulating façade elements are proposed.
 - The existing single glazing (approximate U-value of 5.75 W/sqmK) will be replaced with new double glazing with a U-value of 1.6 W/sqmK or better.
 - The building fabric of the extension has been selected to limit energy demands of internal spaces as far as possible.
 - The boiler will be replaced with a new condensing type, with an efficiency of 97.3%.
 - Each bedroom will be provided with new radiators with thermostatic radiator valves.

- Use of absence detection to switch off lights when a space is vacated.
- Use of efficient LED lighting (circa 20% more efficient than existing system)
- New Combined Heat and Power system
- Inclusion of 100 sqm of Solar PV system.

- 6.41 These measures will significantly improve the energy efficiency of the building. The Energy and Sustainability Statement calculates that the energy reduction, CHP and renewable energy measures will improve the total energy **savings by 39.58% from the existing building emissions and 6.25% above Part L 2013 of the Building Regulations Compliant Development**. This is a significant energy efficiency saving given the constraints of refurbishing an existing building.
- 6.42 A BREEAM pre-assessment has also been completed for the Ramsay Hall proposals. This states that an **Excellent** pre-assessment score of 74.07 is currently being achieved.
- 6.43 Camden Planning Guidance CPG3 'Sustainability' provides an Energy Hierarchy against which the energy saving features of the proposal can be assessed: 'be lean', 'be clean' and 'be green'.
- 6.44 It is considered that the proposals have fully incorporated the Energy Hierarchy and will provide significant energy savings as part of the refurbishment. The proposals therefore conform to Policy DP22 'Promoting sustainable design and construction' and Policy CS13 'Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards'.

Noise

- 6.45 The proposal includes the removal of redundant plant enclosures and outdated machinery. This will improve the visual amenity of the building as the enclosures are currently visible from street level and detract from the building.
- 6.46 The proposal includes the replacement of this outdated or redundant machinery with a modern mechanical and engineering strategy. The majority of equipment is located within the basement (6 x condensers, 2 x air handling units, 3 x boiler and CHP), however some machinery is also required on the roof. This includes a number of extract fans, 2 x heat recovery units and a dry cooler.
- 6.47 Policy DP28 states that the Council will only grant permission for plant or machinery if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity and does not exceed the Camden noise thresholds. Policy DP26 also resists development that will cause harmful effects on the amenity of occupiers and nearby properties. This includes visual outlook, noise and vibration.
- 6.48 A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared to support the planning application and confirms that the proposed plant machinery is in accordance with Table E of Policy DP28. The acoustic consultant undertook a noise survey to confirm the existing background noise. The report then assessed the impact of the chosen plant items at the nearest noise sensitive receptors.
- 6.49 The report concludes that the predicted noise levels will not exceed 5 dB below the minimum external background noise at the nearest noise sensitive receptors. The proposals will therefore meet LB Camden's noise thresholds and are in accordance with Policy DP28.

Daylight/Sunlight

- 6.50 Camden Policy DP26 'Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours' states that "*the Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity*". Specifically Part C states that the 'sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels' are factors that will be considered.

- 6.51 The proposals are predominantly for a refurbishment, but include the remodelling of the 5th floor (with consistent massing to the existing) and an extension above the Rome block. GVA has therefore been instructed to undertake a Daylight/ Sunlight analysis of the proposals to support the planning application. The report concludes that no existing neighbouring habitable rooms will experience a noticeable or material loss of Daylight and Sunlight and that there will be no material loss of amenity. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy DP26.

Transport and Servicing

- 6.52 A Transport Statement has been prepared by Icen Project Ltd to support this planning application.
- 6.53 The Transport Statement confirms that the Site benefits from excellent pedestrian and public transport accessibility. The Site has an existing PTAL rating of 6b, which is the highest level that can be achieved. The Site is also located approximately 340m (a 3-5 minute walk) from the main UCL Bloomsbury Campus.
- 6.54 Vehicular access through the site will be removed along with all of the existing 4 car parking spaces. The Site will therefore generate very few car borne trips as no vehicle parking is provided.
- 6.55 The proposals include consolidated loading bays and the Transport Statement confirms that the deliveries to the Site will be low and in accordance with the existing arrangements.
- 6.56 Ramsay Hall currently accommodates 32 cycle parking spaces within the internal courtyard. The Transport Statement highlights the very low usage of the cycle parking facilities at Ramsay Hall and other UCL student accommodation buildings. Please see the table below. This is due to the very close proximity of the halls of residence to the UCL main Bloomsbury campus, which makes cycling to the university unnecessary.

Student Accommodation	Number of cycle spaces	Number and % of cycle spaces used by students
Ramsay Hall	32	17 (47%)
New Hall	175	18 (10%)
John Dodgson House	50	8 (16%)
Astor College	90	7 (8%)

(Source: Transport Statement)

- 6.57 The proposals include 737 sqm of additional floorspace. However, this only includes 176 sqm of additional accommodation floorspace above the Rome block and the total accommodation floorspace is consistent with the existing. The majority of additional floorspace provides new student facilities on the ground floor.
- 6.58 The proposals will provide an additional 17 bedrooms. However, as illustrated in Section 4, this will result in the net loss of 8 bedspaces and therefore 8 less students on site. This is due to the change in room typologies with less twin rooms being provided in the refurbished halls.
- 6.59 The London Plan (2015) requires one cycle space per two students (for long-term parking) and one cycle space per 40 students (for short-term parking). Given the proposals result in a net loss of students on-site (even though there is an increase in floorspace); it is considered that the existing cycle parking provision is sufficient. This is supported by the usage evidence highlighted above and has been discussed with LB Camden planning officers.
- 6.60 The proposal seeks to reprovide the existing 32 cycle parking spaces in secure and partly covered facilities within the internal courtyard. This provision is considerably above the current need and allows for a

significant increase in cycle parking usage in the future. The provision of any additional cycle parking spaces is considered unnecessary and will result in the loss of useable open space and landscaping for students (which is greatly needed).

- 6.61 Given the proposals are predominantly for a refurbishment and result in the net loss of students on-site, the reprovision of the existing 32 cycle parking spaces is considered to be acceptable.

7 Conclusions

7.1 UCL is seeking planning permission and advertisement consent for the:

“Refurbishment of Ramsay Hall comprising a single storey roof top extension above the Rome block; external alterations associated with remodelling of 5th floor; the creation of a rear glazed walkway extension and infill at ground level; relocation of main access, elevational alterations, installation of new signage and associated works for student accommodation (Sui Generis)”

7.2 The UCL 2034 strategy aims to secure and improve on UCL’s international standing. A key component to delivering this vision is providing a world class university estate that enhances the student experience. UCL is therefore embarking on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment of its estate to ensure it continues to attract the best staff and students from around the world.

7.3 High quality student accommodation provision is an important part of the wider student experience and is a key aspect of UCL’s ability to attract the best students. Ramsay Hall is UCL’s flagship halls of residence for first year undergraduate students. However, the existing facilities are dated and do not adequately meet student expectations. The building has never undergone a comprehensive refurbishment and there is now an opportunity to significantly improve the facilities and appearance of the building.

7.4 This proposal is predominantly for a comprehensive internal refurbishment, but includes a number of associated external works including minor extensions at ground and above the Rome block. The total additional floorspace is 767sqm, but the main driver of the project is updating the type of accommodation and increasing the amount of student social space within the building. The proposal will create an additional 17 bedrooms, but a net loss of 8 bedspaces (due to a change of bedroom typologies).

7.5 The proposals are illustrated in detail in the Design and Access Statement and described in this Statement. The proposed design has been carefully considered and informed by extensive consultation with LB Camden planning and design officers and the BCAAC. The proposal will help reveal and enhance the building’s existing characteristics, whilst sensitively remodelling and altering areas to ensure it is fit for modern use. The final design solution is therefore a sensitive and successful response that will create a unified identity for the building that enhances its appearance and the setting of the conservation area.

7.6 The proposals will deliver a number of significant benefits which are relevant to the determination of this planning application including:

- Updating the type and quality of accommodation provided by the flagship halls of residence to meet modern student demands (with more en-suites and choice of sharing arrangements).
- Significantly improving the energy efficiency of the building through the provision of a number of energy measures, including solar PVs and a new CHP. These measures will improve the total energy savings by 39.58% from the existing building emissions and 6.25% above Part L 2013 of the Building Regulations Compliant Development. A BREEAM pre-assessment score of **Excellent** is currently being achieved.
- Increasing the amount of social space within the building including new student facilities.
- Enhancing and simplifying the accessibility of the building across the various level changes.
- Providing a consolidated off-street back-of-house services and loading bay solution.
- Creating a new central landscaped courtyard amenity.

- Creation of a sedum/ green roof above the glazed walkway.
- New welcoming entrance that better relates to the streetscape.
- Repair worn and degrading parts of the façade. Enhance the wider external appearance of the building and create a unified identify for the blocks with a consistent consolidated 5th floor.
- Removal of unsightly balustrades and defunct roof plant enclosures at roof level that detract from views within the Conservation Area.
- Removal of 4 car parking spaces to deliver a car free development.
- Upgraded cycle parking facilities.

7.7 The proposals therefore provide a successful upgrade and refurbishment to an outdated building to ensure the accommodation meets the demands of today's students. We therefore consider that planning consent should be granted.

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