
THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
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Rob Tulloch
Development Control
London Borough of Camden
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Your reference: 2015/4408/P;
2015/4541/L; 2015/4500/L
Our reference: 2015/08/010

28 August 2015

env.devcon@camden.gov.uk

Dear Mr Tulloch

RE: Great Hall and Library at Lincoln's Inn, Camden (Grade II*, *Philip Hardwick* and *PC Hardwick*, 1842-5); alterations to the Great Hall and Library and to build two extensions housing an education centre and additional library space

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application which was discussed by our Southern Buildings Committee at its most recent meeting. We were previously consulted by Rick Mather Architects at the pre-application stage and our advice to them is also attached. Whilst the majority of our initial concerns for the scheme have been addressed in the application, we would like changes to be made to the design of the proposed library extension before consent is granted.

The need for the demolition of the Under Treasurer's House is understood. In order to justify the loss the building, the new design would need to relate better the library than the present Under Treasurer's house does, and does well. Clearly a larger building than the existing one is sought, though the site is without the space to sensitively accommodate this. Therefore, if a building is to replace the Under Treasurer's House on the scale of what is proposed, its design is of utmost importance. Whilst the efforts to incorporate a sense of verticality and better articulation are appreciable and a step in the right direction, we feel that the design still needs finessing.

Our main concerns relate to the roof line, which should not be lopsided. This would be discordant with the Hardwick designed complex. Inspiration might be taken from the design of both the 1960s Under Treasurer's House and the original Steward's House of 1848, which feature symmetrical, steeply pitched roofs in deference to the main library building.

Secondly, at every level, the library extension should finish in line with the main library building, including the ground floor. No other buildings about the boundary wall; it should remain possible to walk along the space in between the new building and the wall, as is possible along the entire stretch of the Library and Great Hall buildings.

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Finally, concerning the works to the Great Hall outlined in application 2, it is not entirely clear what the new oak floor will look like. We suggest that this must look like Hardwick's original design – not a floor with a contemporary character.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

Alex Bowring
Conservation Adviser

Cc. Victoria Pound, Camden Council
Michael Dunn, Historic England

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Tim Paul
Rick Mather Architects
123 Camden High Street
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Our reference: 2015/04/017

11 May 2015

tpaul@rickmather.com

Dear Tim

RE: Great Hall and Library at Lincoln's Inn, Camden (Grade II*, *Philip Hardwick* and *PC Hardwick*, 1842-5); pre-application to carry out alterations to the Great Hall and Library and to build two extensions housing an education centre and additional library space

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this pre-application scheme. The proposals were discussed by the Society's Southern Buildings Committee at its most recent meeting, and I write now to convey our comments. In short, we have some concerns as to the design of the scheme for the proposed extensions and the alterations to the Grade II*-listed buildings.

We understand that works to the Great Hall, Library and East Terrace were carried out in 2004 but that since then the needs of Lincoln's Inn have evolved. Some of the proposed works are to undo the alterations of 2004, for example, reinstating the original entrance to the Great Hall. Given that substantial alterations were completed just ten years ago, we urge Lincoln's Inn to put into place a conservation management plan. It is imperative that a coherent plan as to how the site should be handled be implemented. Such a plan would provide an informed management strategy for the site and avoid the need for major alterations particularly within such a short time frame.

We have the following concerns relating to the proposed scheme:

- (i) It is proposed to replace the current Under Treasurer's House, dating from the 1960s, with a new library and administration building. The original building on the site was the Steward's House by the *Hardwicks*, a picturesque design that perfectly complemented the next door Library. Presumably this was destroyed or damaged in the Second World War. In the 1960s the Under Treasurer's House was built. It is a sensitive piece of contextual design, that retained the harmony of this very important complex. Its vertical small-scale fenestration, diapered brick and steeply pitched roof use the language of the previous building and of the hall, despite lacking the richness of the original

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Steward's House. Its demolition would require substantial justification, and could only ever be justified if the proposed replacement related better to the Library and the complex as a whole than the existing building. The proposed building does not do this. Its lack of articulation, the unrelieved expanses of plain brickwork, the over-large fenestration to Lincoln's Inn Fields, the horizontal fenestration to the rear, and the blockiness of the shallow-pitched roof are all discordant, causing harm to the listed buildings and the conservation area. The design needs to be reconsidered.

- (ii) The design of the glazed link should be revised to encompass less of the turret wall of the Library.
- (iii) We accept the principle of developing underneath the East Terrace. However, the detailing of the glazing should be refined. First, the roof light against the foundation walls of the Great Hall should be moved away from the historic building into the East Terrace avoiding an incongruous juxtaposition between the glazing and the building. Secondly, the glazed wall at the end of the East Terrace should also be refined. Such an unrelieved amount of glazing would create a harsh contrast to the Great Hall. Instead, the glazing should be broken up with mullions and perhaps softened with landscaping.
- (iv) Finally, we understand that alterations are proposed to the Great Hall floor and dais. The maple flooring is to be replaced with oak and the dais is to be extended. For both alterations, it is necessary to provide supporting information and, in the case of extending the dais beyond the traditional point of the first bay, justification as to why it is required.

If Rick Mather Architects develop any further designs, the Victorian Society would welcome the opportunity to provide additional comments on the proposals at this pre-application stage.

Yours sincerely

Sarah L. Caradec

Conservation Adviser

Cc. Stuart Cade, Rick Mather Architects
Victoria Pound, Camden Council
Michael Dunn, Historic England