

73 Fulham Park Gardens
London
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28th August 2015

**OBJECTION OT APPLICATION 2015/4408/P & L BY THE HONOURABLE
SOCIETY OF LINCLON'S INN**

I write to register my objection to the application by Lincoln's in to demolish the current Under Treasurer's house and replace it with a new library/office building. Granting this application would result in substantial harm to the Grade II* listed Library and the Great Hall and is in conflict with local and national policy.

My interest

I am a barrister member of Lincoln's Inn and was called to the Bar by the Inn on 10 October 2013. Prior to that I had been a student member of the Inn since 2011.

I regularly use the Inn as a place to study, to interact with other members of the profession and to relax.

Of particular relevance is that I was until recently a student member of the Inn. I am therefore particularly aware of the educational needs of student and young barrister members of the Inn and the Inn's ability to meet those needs.

Harm

I am not an architectural historian and understand that matters of aesthetic judgement are to some degree a question of personal taste. However, I cannot see how the proposal could fail to be regarded as causing substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II* listed Library and Great Hall and to Sub Area 9 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area more generally.

Harm by Demolition

The Under Treasurer's house itself makes a valuable contribution to the conservation area. It has the appearance of a country cottage in the heart of the city. This contributes and adds interest to the 'oasis' identified in the relevant Core Strategy by creating a rural feel in the heart of an urban area. Indeed, the House's atypical architecture adds to the variety of housing in the area. Were it demolished this would not only substantially harm the conservation area but would also contravene CS6 (1) which protects the variety of housing within the Borough.

Harm by construction

The poor quality of design in the replacement building has been noted by distinguished architects. It is out of keeping with and causes substantial harm to the

Grade II* listed Great Hall and library. As such it contravenes Camden Core Strategy policy CS14, London Plan Policy 7.8D and paragraphs 132 and 138 of the NPPF.

Without listing all of the design defects of the building I wish to highlight the following three design issues:

- The proposed new building has a squat and bulky rectilinear form with a low pitched roof that sits uncomfortably with the castellated and steeply pitched roofline of the library and Great Hall.
- The proposed new building has neither the diagonal blue brickwork nor stone quoining that are prominent features of the library and Great Hall.
- The asymmetry between the large protruding windows and diminutive recessed windows in the proposed new building jar with the window design of the library and Great Hall.

The proposed new building is therefore neither sufficiently similar to nor different from the Great Hall and library buildings. It's superficial similarity (it is a building of red brick with some large windows) results in an especially unwelcome and discordant intrusion on the setting of the Great Hall and library. This causes substantial harm to that setting

Justification/ benefit

It is in relation to the suggested need for and benefit resulting from the proposed development that my representations may be most pertinent. I was, until recently, a student member of the Inn and as a pupil barrister I continue to receive education and training from the Inn. I am for this reason acutely aware of the educational needs of and facilities available to junior members of the Inn. I can therefore say with confidence that I have never regarded the Inn as under resourced in this area.

Library

There is always ample space for study in the library. Even at the busiest times, for example immediately prior to the bar exams, I have never been unable to find a seat there. On the contrary, when using the library it is uncommon to share a desk (which has space for two or more library users).

Even if there were congestion in the library, which I have never experienced, three other legal libraries are available to all members of the Inn within walking distance at the other Inns of Court. Indeed, this area must be one of the best served by library facilities in London.

Any additional book storage space required could be provided underground without causing substantial harm to the setting of the library and Great Hall. It cannot therefore justify such harm.

Lecture/advocacy training space

There are two large spaces in which lectures are frequently given to members of the Inn, namely the Great Hall and the Old Hall. There is therefore no need for additional lecture space. Whilst these spaces may not have all of advantages of a modern lecture hall, they seat large numbers of people and having myself attended a number of

lectures in both venues I am of the view that they are fit for purpose. Providing additional lecture space therefore does not even approach a justification for causing substantial harm to the setting of Grade II* listed buildings.

In addition, the Inn has a number of rooms on Rolls Passage very close to the inn in which advocacy training takes place. These rooms are modern and well suited to that function. Travelling between the two causes little if any inconvenience and there is no need whatsoever for advocacy rooms to be located on Inn's main site.

Finally, much of the Inn's advocacy training is undertaken off-site during residential weekends. This is not, as I understand it, due to a lack of available space in the Inn, but rather because spending a weekend out of London removes participants from the distractions of everyday life and results in a greater level of integration amongst students as well as between students and tutors. There is therefore limited need for advocacy training space in London. Any proposal that this residential advocacy weekends cease following the construction of the new building (I am not aware that this is suggested) would mean the proposal will have a negative impact on the Inn's educational role.

There would therefore be little if any real educational benefit as a result of the proposal. Any benefit there was would be confined to members of the Inn and not to the "public". NPPF paragraph 133 requires substantial **public** benefits. The proposal cannot be said to bring such benefits. Any benefit of the Inn's members falls far short of outweighing the substantial harm caused to the setting of the Grade II* listed Buildings.

Office Space

The Inn has sufficient and modern offices at 33 Chancery Lane. Any practical or administrative benefit to moving these on site is negligible. The two are within a couple of minutes walk of each other.

Even if additional or onsite office space were needed the Inn owns a large amount of such space within the confines of its site.

This cannot then justify causing substantial harm to the setting of the Great Hall and Library.

Conclusion

For these reasons I wish to convey my strong objection to the proposal which would cause substantial harm to the setting of Grade II* listed buildings and the Conservation Area for little if any benefit and therefore contravenes both local and national planning policy.

CHARLES T F STREETEN

Planning Application by Lincoln's Inn 2015 4408 P & L

1. I am William Glossop of 16 Mecklenburgh Square WC1N 2AD. I am a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, retired Immigration Judge and member of the Lincoln's Inn Bar Representation Committee. I am the Secretary of the Heritage Shell Guide Trust and have published the Heritage Shell Guide to West Yorkshire.
2. I wish to object to the above application which involves the demolition of the Under Treasurers House and replacement with a badly conceived and badly designed office suite and reading room. I am very familiar with Lincoln's Inn having lived and worked close by for nearly 50 years.
3. The group of Great Hall and Library by Hardwick is a very impressive neo Tudor assembly still fulfilling its designed purpose and renown throughout the world. It is magnificent in its expression of towering strength especially in relation to the relatively bare surrounding space. Its setting is of the highest importance to Lincoln's Inn Fields and from the North lawn of the Inn. The Great Hall and Library are listed Grade II*. Another important building which also depends upon the space of the North lawn for its setting is Stone Buildings Grade I. The Under Treasurer's House is part of the setting of both buildings and according to the Conservation area Statement it makes a positive contribution. It has been derogated for being pastiche and inconvenient but fits in well with its neighbours not only by not detracting from them in terms of competition but by making a positive contribution to the scale of its more important neighbours.
4. Its particular importance is in providing a foil or sense of scale for its neighbours which to a large extent otherwise stand in splendid isolation. The importance of setting may be compared with that of the Houses of Parliament from across the Thames; the open space is essential to the view and the interposition of some pip squeak modern building linked to them would undoubtedly jar. That is not say that old does not mix with new if of appropriate scale and showing respect for an existing neighbour. I would say that the British Library achieves this with an important neighbour. But the contribution of the Under Treasurer's House is to lend scale without drawing attention to itself. It puts me in mind of pictures of great gothic French cathedrals soaring above medieval houses – their neighbours. The smaller houses lend a sense of scale and proportion. To demolish this house would remove an important asset in the overall scene and cause substantial harm to surrounding Grade II* and Grade I buildings in this Conservation Area.
5. It is sought to replace the Under Treasurer's House with a new building which is wrong in every way. It blatantly seeks to maximise modern space on the existing footprint by squeezing too much into the resulting shell which emerges as a modern brick tower like a throwback to Sussex University in the 1960's. Really the comments of the Victorian Society say it all: the roof angles are wrong, the fenestration is wrong in terms both of its composition and proportion to brickwork, the gridiron window is alien, the asymmetric shallow roof gives it the air of a cocked hat. It is a design which shouts "look at me!" when it should be quietly subsumed into the background. Unfortunately this aspect is quite deliberate in that a search was made for an opportunity within the Inn to create a building representative of the 21st century. Architects were asked to find space or opportunities for rebuilding and the result is this conspicuous eyesore for which there exists no justification in terms of need. This dealt with below, but the desire for this icon of the present age is born

of vanity and the desire to make a mark at the expense of magnificent buildings in an arcadian setting in the midst of WC2. Technically the proposal conflicts with NPPF 132 and 138, and CS 14(a)(b), DP 25 (b)(c)(g).

6. From my own knowledge I can say there is no justification for this demolition and new building; there does not exist a clear and convincing justification as required by NPPF 133 and there are NO substantial public benefits. This is because there does not exist a need for additional reading places in the Library and there is sufficient space for storage possible underground without demolishing the UT's House. A great deal of wish fulfilment has been employed to justify this work which does not bear scrutiny. There is in fact no need for on-site storage of the arcane works sought to be accommodated. The British Library manages very well by calling up reserve stock from Yorkshire when items are only rarely needed. An examination of present books in the library stacks will reveal to anyone who cares to look the successive editions of old textbooks going back to Victorian times. As one interested in antiquarian matters I applaud this but the case has not been made for new storage on site and above ground. It should not be forgotten that most modern works and reports have been digitalised and the library resource for keeping ancient books only consulted rarely should be kept in proportion.
7. Further to (6) above it will be noticed that the proposed new building would in fact be mostly designated for offices. It seems something of a Trojan Horse to call the building a Library extension. Only a few years ago the Inn redesigned its offices to house the Principal Officers in accommodation harking back to Victorian times in terms of personal space. To achieve that some functions not absolutely required were moved to 33 Chancery Lane which the Inn bought specifically for that purpose. It is about three minutes walk away. There is no need to now abandon this facility and build a new alien structure for the marginal convenience of returning accounting and surveyor staff to an office one minute away. There do not exist exceptional circumstances justifying the propose demolition and building and there are no identifiable public benefits.
8. I respectfully ask that the proposal to demolish the Under Treasurer's House and replace it with offices and new reading room be refused.

GW Glossop

28 August 2015