

Ms Frances Wheat, Acting Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning,  
London Borough of Camden Council,  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 5, Pancras Square,  
c/o The Town Hall,  
Judd Street,  
London, W.C.1.H. 9J.E.

For the attention of Mr Rob Tulloch, Case-officer.

Printed copy sent by first-class post.

7<sup>th</sup>. September, 2015.

Dear Ms Wheat and Mr Tulloch,

LINCOLN'S INN, LONDON, W.C.1.: PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF THE EXISTING  
UNDER-TREASURER'S HOUSE AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A NEW BUILDING FOR  
LIBRARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE USES

APPLICATION 4: APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND LISTED BUILDING  
CONSENT REFERENCES 2015/4408/P and 4541/L

I am writing to urge your Council to seek a fundamental review of the external design of the proposed development immediately adjacent to the New Hall Library at Lincoln's Inn and the submission of significantly amended proposals before determining the present applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent (Application 4).

I write as an architect and consultant with direct and extensive experience across some thirty-five years in both private practice and the public sector in the design of new development in historic contexts, including work within the Inns of Court and the London Borough of Camden, and relevant experience in the management of urban design and conservation matters in the development-control process derived from past roles as a principal officer in the City of Westminster Council's Department of Planning and Transportation and as Regional Architect and Assistant Regional Director for English Heritage London.

I have looked with particular interest at the extensive proposals submitted by Montagu Evans

LLP on behalf of the Programme Director of The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn relating to The Great Hall and Library Project, and wish to comment specifically on the proposals for the proposed demolition of the existing Under-Treasurer's House and its replacement with a new development for library and administrative uses insofar as they will affect the immediately adjacent, grade II\* listed New Hall Library and its setting, the settings of the grade II\* listed New Hall, the grade II listed western boundary wall and other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity, the setting of the formally registered Lincoln's Inn Fields, and the character and appearance of Sub-Area 9 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

In setting-out these comments, I would confirm that I have looked closely at the application site from within Lincoln's Inn and from Lincoln's Inn Fields, from Newman's Row in the north and Seale Street in the south, and at the documentation supporting the applications, including the Museum of London Archaeology's *Historic Environment Assessment*, Rick Mather Architects' *Statement of Significance* and *Design and Access Statement*, and, of course, the submitted drawings. I have also addressed the proposals against the relevant policies and supplementary guidance of The Mayor and Camden Council, and the published guidance of English Heritage/Historic England including *Building in context: New development in historic areas*, published jointly with CABE.

In my judgement, as presently submitted, the external design of the proposed new development – both as an almost freestanding building, and as 'an extension' to the grade II\* listed New Hall Library - fails to offer an architectural solution of a character and quality commensurate with the special architectural and historic interest and significance of its site. I consider that the proposed development would fail to preserve the special interest of the grade II\* listed New Hall Library and its setting, the settings the grade II\* listed New Hall, the grade II listed western boundary wall and other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the applications site and the formally registered Lincoln's Inn Fields. In addition, I consider that the new development would fail to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Sub-Area 9 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Overall, I believe that the proposed development would fail to sustain the significance of the site and its setting and the settings of other designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the applications site.

Anomalously, despite the extensive historical research that has been undertaken and the detailed analysis of the site that has been carried out – as reflected in the extensive documentation submitted in support of the applications – the external design of the proposed new development fails to either incorporate or reflect valuable and distinctive architectural features of the Hardwicks' outstanding New Hall and New Hall Library complex of 1843-1845 - as wisely and sensitively extended by George Gilbert Scott in 1871-1873 – or the Hardwicks' more modest ancillary buildings, such as the main gateway to Lincoln's Inn from Lincoln's Inn Fields and the adjacent porter's lodge, and the original Steward's House, demolished ca 1962 and the site now occupied by the present Under-Treasurer's House. Essential or desirable architectural features ('explicit design references' as referred to in the letter from Historic England of the 18<sup>th</sup> June) that are conspicuous in their absence from the external design of the

proposed new development include diapered brickwork, steeply pitched roof-slopes and gables, tall stacks, the use of stone quoins, the use of moulded stone copings and projecting strings, and the use of moulded stone mullions and transoms to the fenestration.

Only with a detailed proposal for an architectural solution of a character and quality commensurate with the special architectural and historic interest and significance of its site, can the loss of the existing Under-Treasurer's House of 1962-1964 be considered acceptable, given that it clearly shares in the grade II\* listed status of the New Hall Library to which it is directly attached, and is specifically identified as a 'contributor' in Appendix 3 of Camden Council's *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy* of April, 2011.

In relation to the two-storey link between the proposed development and the existing, projecting, octagonal, staircase-turret at the north-west corner of the New Hall Library, the use of an all-glass solution at first floor level, and a part-glazed solution at ground floor level, may have an unintended, significant visual effect when viewed from the west and east, if the glass surfaces are unduly reflective, and if the interiors are brightly lit. It is suggested that there is scope to effect a very much more reticent and satisfactory connection.

Mindful of the relevant policies relating to the need for good design and on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework* of March, 2012, the relevant policies and supplementary guidance of the Mayor and Camden Council, and the published guidance of English Heritage/Historic England, I would urge your Council to seek a fundamental review of the external design of the proposed development and the submission of significantly amended proposals before determining the present applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent. These should provide an architectural solution of a character and quality commensurate with the special architectural and historic interest and significance of its site, as well as preserving the special interest of the grade II\* listed New Hall Library and its setting, the settings the grade II\* listed New Hall, the grade II listed western boundary wall and other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the applications site and the formally registered Lincoln's Inn Fields; either preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Sub-Area 9 of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area; and sustaining, rather than harming, the significance of the site and its setting and the settings of other designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the applications site.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any clarification of these comments.

Kind regards,

Paul Velluet.

PAUL VELLUET, M.Litt., RIBA, IHBC, CHARTERED ARCHITECT  
9, BRIDGE ROAD, ST MARGARET'S, TWICKENHAM, T.W.I. I.R.E.  
e-mail: [;](mailto:) telephone: [;](tel:) mobile: [;](tel:)

Copy to Councillor Sue Vincent.