

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 Treasurer's 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 and Scott 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 makes a positive contribution. It has been criticised 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 their scale.
4. Its particular importance is in providing a foil or sense of scale for the Hall, Library and Stone Buildings 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. 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 design which is wrong in every way. It blatantly seeks to maximise modern space on the existing footprint by squeezing too much into the shell which emerges as a modern brick tower like a throwback to the 1960's Lucky Jim era. The comments of the Victorian Society aptly 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, an 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 is dealt with below, but the desire for this icon of the present age is born of vanity and the desire to

make a mark on history at the expense of buildings of tremendous strength set in an Arcadian setting in the heart of WC2. Technically the proposal conflicts with NPPF 132 and 138, and CS 14(a)(b), DP 25 (b)(c)(g).




6. NEED. 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 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. An examination of present books in the library stacks will reveal to anyone who cares to look old textbooks going back to Victorian times. As one interested in antiquarian matters I applaud this but the case has not been made for a new building above ground. It should not be forgotten that most modern works and reports have been digitalised and the proportion of library resource for keeping ancient books only consulted rarely is a changing field.
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 required to be adjacent were moved to 33 Chancery Lane which the Inn bought specifically for the purpose. It is about three minutes walk away. There is now no need to abandon this facility and build a new alien structure for the marginal convenience of placing accounting and surveyor staff in an office one minute away. There are no exceptional circumstances justifying demolition and a new 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

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Planning Application Details

Year	2015
Number	4408
Letter	P
Planning application address	Lincoln's Inn
Title	Mr.
Your First Name	Henry
Initial	M
Last Name	Harrod
Organisation	Chambers at 5 Stone Buildings
Comment Type	Object
Postcode	WC2A3XT
Address line 1	5 Stone Buildings
Address line 2	Lincolns Inn
Address line 3	
Postcode	WC2A 3XT
E-mail	
Confirm e-mail	
Contact number	

Your comments on the planning application

The proposed "library and administrative building" is in a style which is inappropriate in the context of the neighbouring listed buildings both when viewed from within the Inn and from Lincolns Inn Fields.

If you wish to upload a file containing your comments then use the link below

No files attached

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About this form

Issued by	Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries Camden Town Hall Judd Street London WC1H 9JE
Form reference	10215759

Alex Bowring
Conservation Adviser

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
The champion for Victorian and Edwardian architecture

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Your reference: 2015/4408/P;
2015/4541/L; 2015/4500/L
Our reference: 2015/08/010

02 September 2015

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 Under Treasurer's House is not part of the nineteenth century fabric, but it does have an important relationship with Hardwick's complex. In order to justify the loss of the existing building, the new design would need to relate better to 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 abut 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