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Conservation Adviser

THE VICTORIAN SOCIETY
The champion for Victorian and Edwardian architecture

Rob Tulloch
Development Control
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

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