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6<sup>th</sup> June 2016

London Borough of Camden  
Planning Solutions Team  
Camden Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sir / Madam

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**  
**WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE**  
**REGENTS PARK CENTRE, LONGFORD STREET, LONDON, NW1 3HB**

I am instructed by Westminster Kingsway College to submit to you the enclosed planning application for:

*“The insertion of windows at first floor level to facilitate internal refurbishment of the Regents Park Centre”*

Accordingly, please find enclosed copies of the following documents:

1. Planning application forms and completed Certificate A
2. Plans as follows:
  - Site Location Plan and Block Plan 2003 D5 P1
  - Existing First Floor Layout 2001 D5 P2
  - Proposed First Floor Layout 2002 D5 P2
  - Existing Elevations 3001 D5 P2
  - Proposed Elevations 3002 D5 P2
3. Design and Access Statement prepared by Bond Bryan Architects

The planning application fee of £585 has been paid online via the Planning Portal.

### **The Property**

The Regents Park Centre extends to 3,300 sq m and is occupied by Westminster Kingsway College. The centre provides general teaching classrooms for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), employability programmes and classroom based apprenticeship provision, together with staff offices for adult pathways, health and social care, and support functions, including HR and finance.

In addition, there is a nursery which provides childcare for students, staff and the local community.

In 2015/16 the centre had some 2,000 learners.

The building extends over four floors. The first floor is a double height space as it accommodates the Mandela Theatre on part of the floor. However, the theatre is no longer operational, and has been used for storage purposes for over 15 years.



Figure 1: Regents Park Centre, Longford Street

The main pedestrian entrance to the College is from Longford Street. Car parking is provided to the rear of the building accessed via Laxton Place and Stanhope Street.



Figure 2; View from Stanhope Street

The property is in a mixed area, with new offices at Regents Place to the south and estate residential to the north. Immediately to the rear / north of the building is a 19 storey residential tower block, known as Bucklebury, which has balconies which overlook the subject property.

### **The Proposed Development**

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 Westminster Kingsway College and City and Islington College will merge to form a new College. As a consequence of which, the College is reviewing its estate and operational requirements. Subject to approval from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, the new College will be known as Central London Colleges Group. The brands and identifies of Westminster Kingsway and City and Islington Colleges will be retained, and a third division – the Central London Colleges Training (CLCT) – will provide a focus for apprenticeships, employer engagement and work based learning.

The merged College will have a student enrolment of some 26,500 across 9 centres in London.

The planning application therefore seeks to provide appropriate accommodation at the Regents Park Centre to reflect the needs of the merged College. Specifically, the following functions will be accommodated:

1. **Central London Colleges Training (CLCT)** will be launched at the Regents Park Centre. This will include consolidated accommodation for relevant staff from the two Colleges and creating new meeting facilities focussed specifically on employers. This facility will operate as an extension of the Group's apprenticeship programmes and as an employability hub, providing guidance and skills to students to assist them with securing employment and will provide the opportunity for engagement with employers. As the largest apprenticeship provider in London, the Group is well placed to capitalise on the Government's prioritisation of apprenticeship training and the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017
2. **Group Executive** of the merged College will consolidate at the Regents Park Centre.

In addition, to facilitate the above, the Finance, Human Resources and Management Information functions of the two Colleges will relocate to the Centre for Business Arts and Technology on Camden Road, one of City and Islington's sites, which has sufficient capacity to absorb the business support functions without impacting on its educational provision.

The works at the Regents Park Centre will primarily involve internal refurbishment on the first floor, but will necessitate the insertion of windows within the double height space in order to create more usable accommodation with natural daylight. New windows are therefore proposed on the north, south and west elevations of the building at the first floor level.

In total 17 new windows are proposed. The windows will be PPC finished, thermally broken, double glazed, aluminium units.

Internally, the floor will accommodate offices at the front / southern side of the building to accommodate the Group Executive and meeting rooms on the northern side / rear of the building. Displaced uses on this floor will relocate to Camden Road.

The works will also include the conversion of the redundant theatre on the first floor into high quality space for the Central London Colleges Training facility. The space will be refurbished to accommodate this provision and it is proposed to insert windows in the south, east and west elevations of the theatre to provide natural daylight into this space.

In terms of staff and student numbers, the proposed development will result in the following:

- Some 25 staff from City and Islington College in the Employer Engagement and International teams will join their counterparts from WKC at the Regents Park Centre. The new facilities will create capacity for growth in the sales and delivery teams servicing CLCT.

- The new Group Executive and its secretarial staff, comprising 8 staff in total, will move into the Regents Park Centre.
- Some 50 administrative staff will relocate from the Regents Park Centre to Camden Road.

The net impact of staffing levels, once growth is taken into account, is likely to be zero.

It is important to note that none of the curriculum offer at the Regents Park Centre will be displaced by the proposed development. Student numbers will increase over the next 5 years as a result of the growth associated with CLCT.

For example, the number of apprenticeships is expected to increase from 400 to 1,100; commercial training for employers is expected to increase from 60 to 400. The majority of training will be delivered as work based learning at employers' premises, meaning that the proposed development at the Regents Park Centre will support a material increase in the level of skill and training available to young people in London.

### **Planning Considerations**

The proposed use is D1 Education and is consistent with the current use of the building. The internal works do not require planning consent.

The Regents Park Centre has the ability to increase its space utilisation and can accommodate an increase in student numbers. The site is located in a highly sustainable location and students will benefit from good public transport accessibility. The proposed development will not lead to an increase in the demand for car parking at the site.

The insertion of additional windows raises two issues:

#### **(i) Impact on the external appearance of the property**

The subject property is functional in appearance and represents an educational building of its time. The masonry clad elevations are broken up by the horizontality of the windows; with the stair cores creating vertical emphasis. The double height black box theatre projects forward of the front elevation.

The building is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area.

Landscaping in front of the building on Longford Street plays an important part in creating a setting for the building. It is not proposed to remove any landscaping as part of the proposed development.

It is considered that the insertion of new windows will not harm the external appearance of the property, nor the wider area within which it sits. The new windows will be aligned with existing windows on the building. On the Longford Street elevation, for example, the new windows will align with the windows on the ground floor.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development will meet the aims of Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and DP24 of Camden Development Policies 2010.

**(ii) Impact on residential amenity**

The insertion of new windows raises the issue of the potential impact on neighbouring residential properties, specifically those to the rear in Bucklebury and those to the west on Laxton Place.

To the rear, Bucklebury is some 25m away from the Regents Park Centre. The existing windows in the rear elevation of the Regents Park Centre and the balconies on Bucklebury create intervisibility between the two properties.



**Figure 3: View from Second Floor Towards Bucklebury**

The insertion of windows on the first floor will not increase the degree of intervisibility or introduce new vantage points. It is therefore considered that the new windows will not harm the residential amenity of residents in Bucklebury.

To the west, properties on Laxton Place back on to the College. The three storey properties have rear gardens and are separated from the College by intervening landscaping. The trees within the College grounds have recently been pruned at the request of the residents.



**Figure 4: Rear of Laxton Place Properties**

It is proposed to insert two windows in the first floor of the west elevation of the theatre space. This elevation currently has windows on the ground floor, but not at the first floor.



**Figure 5: Existing West Elevation**

There is a distance of some 25m between these properties and the College and it is not considered that the additional windows will lead to a loss of privacy or overlooking due to this distance and the presence of intervening landscaping.

Accordingly, it is clear that the proposed development will meet the terms of Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy and Policy DP26 of the Camden Development Policies 2010.

In summary, the proposed development represents a modest change to the external appearance of the building. It will facilitate the internal refurbishment of the property in order to accommodate the immediate needs of the merged College and it will provide a base for the launch of the Central London Colleges Training, an exciting new initiative which will benefit young people and employers in Camden.

I trust the enclosed documentation provides appropriate detail. However, should you require clarification on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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