

## **PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**Proposed Change of Use from non-residential institution (Use Class D1)  
to cafe and restaurant (Use Class A3) associated with the activities of the  
school.**

**The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

**15-17 Tavistock Place**

**London**

**WC1H 9SH**

**May 2017**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement provides responses to policy considerations raised by the Planning Officer (Mr R. Lester) in respect of this application

The proposal site is one of a wider portfolio of buildings held by LSHTM, notable other buildings being Keppel Street as well as smaller educational and support buildings at 8 and 9 Bedford Square and 36-38 Gordon Square

The submitted application is for a change of use of the space within the LSHTM Tavistock Street campus that currently forms the staff and student canteen, at the rear, and a separate meeting room to the front of the building.

Deliveries to the building are currently via the driveway and archway to the right of the proposed cafe that separate the two main parts of the building. Cycle parking is provided at the rear within the existing covered area.

The current canteen is approx 61m<sup>2</sup> and caters for 430 students and staff who are in day to day occupation of the building, and those attending from the other LSHTM campus and support buildings. The canteen current provides a daily hot food menu, ambient and heated sandwiches, salads, cakes and pastries and hot and cold beverages.

The existing formal meeting room is 53m<sup>2</sup> and provides a seating arrangement for meetings of up to 24 people. This meeting room is currently utilised on an average of 20-24 hours in any one week representing a maximum 45% utilisation of the space in a normal learning week.

The existing canteen and meeting room do not have provision of a compliant disabled WC

Planning permission has been granted for the extension of the educational facility under planning ref 2015/3406/P. The new extension is planned for completion in mid/end 2019 and will add a further 240 staff and students using the building. There is no provision within this new building for additional catering for this increased number.

Neither the existing building nor the approved extension has a learning resource centre or student study areas outside the classroom environment.

Both LSHTM's main campus building do not easily cater for smaller conference or events which involve the wider community as the current arrangements of these buildings necessitates security for the entire building/s to facilitate public access to any single part.

The proposed cafe and restaurant is approximately 101m<sup>2</sup> in floor area. The layout of the space has been design to enable the front and rear sections of the space to be separated to provide a dual use space. The front will provides a permanent catering area which will service the day to day needs of the students, and staff and visitors. The rear area would cater for fluctuations in the catering needs of the school and at quieter periods can be separated by a sliding pocket door to provide a meeting room/lecture room or quiet study area for students.

The alterations include provision of a fully compliant disabled WC

Being a secure area with independent access, the new cafe enables this area of the school to be opened for access by the wider community without compromising the security of the main building. The cafe would service this need for not just this building but the wider portfolio of the schools other buildings.

## 2.0 LAND USE

### 2.1 Relevant Policy

#### Camden Policy DP15 (Community and leisure uses)

To help to meet increased demand for facilities, the Council will expect:

- a) developments that result in any additional need for community or leisure facilities to contribute towards supporting existing facilities or providing for new facilities; and
- b) suitable developments to make rooms available for local community groups to use or hire at a discounted rate, particularly where a development displaces or replaces a community facility.

The Council will protect existing community facilities by resisting their loss unless:

- c) a replacement facility that meets the needs of the local population is provided; or,
- d) the specific community facility is no longer required in its current use. Where this is the case, evidence will be required to show that the loss would not create, or add to, a shortfall in provision for the specific community use and demonstrate that there is no demand for any other suitable community use on the site. Where this is successfully demonstrated, the Council's preferred new use will be affordable housing.

2.2 The officer understands the need for an enhanced space for collaboration between staff and students, however has interpreted the current proposal to be an entirely separate café/restaurant type use and appears to have little or no relationship to the existing education use.

2.3 The Planning Officer has noted a similar arrangement at a Café at UCL, and considers this to be an ancillary use with a student union building and but that this cafe appears to have no separate access for the public. The Applicant states that the proposal here is for this same ancillary use, and as such will be providing a facility for the schools staff and students. It is clear from the applicants inspection of Gordon's Cafe that UCL also accommodate and invite the same public access and interaction with the wider community as is sought by this application. The accompanying photograph provides evidence of window signage to the front of the building reinforcing this invitation for public access.



2.4 The Officer has stated other sites outside the borough can't really be considered.

2.5 The applicant has looked into similar sites within the borough which might also provide similar facilities serving primarily students and staff, but also providing access to the public thus widening its interaction with the wider community.

2.6 The George Farha Cafe Bar at UCL was permitted under a wider planning consent for 23 Gower Place and 134-136 Gower Street (Planning application ref 2010/0478/P) for

*Alterations to existing shopfront to 23 Gower Place, erection of new 2nd and 3rd third floor lift shaft to Old Mouse House (to the rear of 23 Gower Place) following substantial demolition of Old Mouse House, addition of plant to roof of 134-136 Gower Street (the 'Lewis building'), all in association with change of use of basement of 23 Gower Place, Lewis building and Old Mouse House from non-residential institution (Use Class D1) to public house (Use Class A4), change of use of ground floor of Lewis Building and Old Mouse House from non-residential building to cafe and restaurant (Use Class A3) and change of use of 1st and 2nd floors of 23 Gower Place from non-residential institution to public house.*

2.7 In considering the application 2010/0478/P the Planning Officer stated:-

*An important consideration in assessing this application is the fact that these buildings form part of a wider portfolio of buildings held by UCL, and these proposals are aimed at improving the facilities for the students within the University whilst remaining within the ownership of UCL. In this context, a strict application of the Council's policies regarding loss of office floorspace (Policy E2) or educational facilities (Policy C2) is not considered to be appropriate and this assessment is therefore structured around how the proposals may to be assessed in the context and aims of the UDP.*

It is clear from this that this Officer took the view that both the A3 (Cafe) and A4 (Drinking establishment) were an improvement in the facilities for students and as such considered the preceding policy (i.e. C2 to Camden Policy\_DP15) to be inappropriate in the consideration of the application. Having read the wording of both policy C2 and DP15 the applicant sees little difference in the wording or purpose of the policies, other than a preference that should a loss of D1 be justified that the councils preference is for the replacement use to be social housing.

2.8 The applicant would highlight that the current application proposals deliver improvements to facilities for LSHTM students and staff. The existing limited catering space is expanded by the creation of the cafe and linking this to a dual use space at the rear, this providing meeting, and student study space

2.9 The two entrances to Cafe provide direct access for students and staff but also facilitate the same interaction with the public and wider community as exists, and is clearly promoted, at both UCL's Gordon's Cafe and the George Farha Cafe.



Frontage to George Farha Cafe UCL

2.10 The applicant states that the Planning Officer's current view that the cafe would be a entirely separate stand alone cafe is incorrect. The cafe will be the only provision of catering for its 670 students and staff, the loss of which would have a detrimental impact on the facilities it provides, and a negative impact on the overall quality of education provided by the school.

2.11 The current proposal is for a cafe which expands on the existing canteen and improves the catering and facilities within the campus building to service the needs of students and staff, provides a flexible catering/ meeting and study space, and as exists within UCL Cafes which provides for a greater accessibility and interaction with the wider community.

2.12 The Officers suggestion to revert the application to an A1 use would reduce the schools ability to offer the same range of hot food as the current canteen and therefore seeks the same A3 use as approved at UCL's George Farha Cafe.



## Suitability for Proposed Café Use

*Camden Policy CS7 (Promoting Camden's Centres and Shops) requires new retail and other town centre uses to be located within existing designated centres with limited provision of small shops outside centres to meet local needs. Food, drink and entertainment uses, such as cafés are also most appropriately located in commercial areas to minimise their impact on the amenity of local residents. Town centres and Central London Frontages are considered the most suitable locations for such uses.*

2.13 The school is located at the adjoining the designated centre along Marchmont Street. An appeal decision ref T/APP/X5210/A/88/110187/P3 in 1989 for No's 30 and 32 Tavistock Place in 1989 describes the street as;

*" a general area of mixed uses where particular street frontages have characteristics and specific uses which predominate. The length of Tavistock Place between Herbrand Street and Marchmont Street directly opposite the site contains several small hotels which distinguish the immediate area from other nearby frontages, some of which are exclusively commercial, the remainder being residential or related to nearby educational establishments"*

2.14 The inspector view at that time appeared to be that the area was predominantly a mix of commercial uses and that the hotel frontages opposite the school distinguish this section of the street from the residential frontages further along Tavistock Place. This context does not appear to be any different today other than the Bloombury Coffee House which is located to the south west of the school adjoining the residential frontages at No18 Tavistock Place and opposite apartments at 11 and 13 Tavistock Place.

2.15 The existing canteen services the needs of the students and staff of the school and facilities interaction with the wider community in a similar manner to both UCL's Gordon's Cafe and George Farhu Cafe.

2.16 Both UCL's cafes are adjacent to but not within a commercial area. The councils view has been that these are ancillary to the educational use and therefore accorded with the UDP 2006 Policy R1 Location of new retail and entertainment uses (Food and drink and entertainment). To be consistent with previous decisions the application site Tavistock Place the proposals would accord with Policy CS7 being identical to UCL in that this use is ancillary to the educational use and sited adjacent to existing commercial centre.



Map of use classes within the proximity of the site

*Camden Policy DP12 (Supporting strong centres and managing the impact of food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses) requires the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses to not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours.*

2.17 The cafe is at the western end of the school directly opposite the grouping of hotels and is separated from the nearest dwellings via a high wall and passageway.

2.18 The applicant acknowledges the Planning Officers suggestions to omit the signage, and lighting to the building thus removes any potential for there to be any harm to the character of the area.

2.19 The operation of the cafe caters for the educational buildings use is focussed around the day to day operation of the school. As such there would be little difference in the day to day activities in or around the school created by the cafe.

#### **Design and Visual Impact**

*Camden Policies CS14 and DP24 require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings need to be of the highest standard of design with consideration given to the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; the character and proportions of the existing building and the quality of materials to be used. Policies DP25 requires all development to preserve and enhance conservation areas.*

2.20 The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Applicant is happy to incorporate the advice of the Planning Officer and remove the, signage, lighting and dedicated external furniture from the proposals. The resulting street scene and conservation area would therefore remain unaltered by the proposals and thus comply with Polices CS14, DP24 and DP25.



*Existing street scene frontage which will remain unaltered by the proposals*

## Amenity

*Camden Policies DP12 requires the development of food and drink uses to not cause harm the amenity of neighbours. Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours) and CPG 5 (Town Centres, Retail and Employment) set out the range of amenity issues that are relevant including noise and vibration levels from air conditioning units or customers using external seating areas; odour, fumes and dust; refuse and litter and hours of operation.*

2.21 The driver for the new cafe is to service the day to day needs of the school's students and staff. The proposed cafe will have two defined access doors, the door to the rear which would be utilised by the vast majority of staff and students. The existing front access doors would provide access for staff or students from other LSHTM sites, visitors and the wider community.

2.22 The cafe would be dedicated for as a venue for small community involvement events and would be accessed by the existing doors to the front of the building at these times. This arrangement caters well for such smaller events as it avoids the school needing to give access to the whole of the main building along with the larger associated management of security and health and safety for access by the public.

2.23 The applicant notes that The George Farhu Cafe at UCL opens 8.00am to 9.00pm seven days a week. The Bloomsbury Coffee Shop at 20 Tavistock Place (directly opposite) is from 8.00am - 4.30pm weekdays and 8.00am to 1.30pm at weekends.

2.24 The operational hours of the proposed cafe will service the needs of the school and will therefore open at times when the staff and students make use of the building. The building currently operates around the hours of 7.30am - 6.30pm with a lesser day to day activities of staff and evening classes extending this to 9.30pm during some weekdays. Similarly at weekends the school has attendance by staff during the morning periods up to approximately 2pm.

2.25 The existing canteen mechanical installations will be adapted to service the revised internal arrangement. Therefore there would be no greater impact created by the development over and above the existing.

## 3.0 CONCLUSION

3.01 The submitted proposals replace the school's canteen and meeting room and provide a multiuse space that would provide, not only catering and dining facilities for school users, but also an area for the student private study and activities involving the wider community.

3.02 The applicant considers the change of use to reflect similar arrangement that has been accepted by the council for UCL Cafe's and as such, to be consistent with consideration of previous applications, should be viewed by the council on the same basis

3.03 The opening of the cafe would be around the normal operational times of the school and would therefore create no distinguishable increase in activity on or around the school.

3.04 The applicant has agreed to the removal of the external signage lighting and furniture and has thus removed any impact on the character of the street scene.

3.05 The applicant would invite the planning officers reconsideration of the application based on the above information, and amendments to the proposals, and agree its compliance with policies DP15, CS7, DP12 CS14, DP24 DP25 and DP26.