



Historic England

LONDON OFFICE

Mr John Diver  
London Borough of Camden  
Development Management  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763

Our ref: P00591250

15 June 2017

Dear Mr Diver

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015 &  
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON WILKINS QUAD GOWER STREET LONDON  
WC1E 6BT  
Application No 2017/2934/P**

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2017 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. We do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations.

**Historic England Advice**

Historic England was briefly involved in pre-application discussions regarding the proposed erection of a temporary teaching facility within the Main Quad of the Grade I Wilkins Building in Bloomsbury. I attach our pre-application advice letter for your information.

We are pleased to see that the footprint and positioning of the proposed structure responds to the geometry and proportions of the Quad. However, in our opinion, the structure does not respond particularly well to the adjacent Grade II listed domed observatory. Whilst we would prefer to see the structure set away further from the observatory, we acknowledge that this could have implications on the accommodation requirements.

As requested in our advice letter, further information has now been provided in the submitted documentation regarding the materiality and durability of the external shroud to the elevations. This appears to include details of the Wilkins Building's Corinthian features as was suggested at pre-application stage. However, we understand that artwork will be subject to a condition should your Council be minded to approve this application. We suggest that this includes a sample of the actual fabric. We also suggest that opportunities are taken to allow for interpretive text to the wrap (providing this would not compromise the design integrity), which could include information about the adjacent observatory (and help to mitigate the harm to its setting).



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We also note that further justification for the additional teaching space has been provided which has helped to satisfy some of our concerns. We are also reassured by the fact that this is a temporary proposal, and the Quad space will be reinstated at the end of the proposed period.

However, we note that this temporary structure is now intended for 5 years, rather than 3 as proposed at pre-application stage. It should be made clear that Historic England is unlikely to support substantial extensions to the 5 year timeframe, and your Council should consider including an informative to this effect should you be minded to approve the application.

**Recommendation**

Historic England recognises the need for this additional temporary accommodation, and is broadly content with these proposals. Nonetheless, we would urge you to address the above issues, and determine the application in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely



**Alasdair Young**

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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Mr Richard Maung  
Deloitte Real Estate  
London

Direct Dial: 020 7973 3763

Our ref: PA00435501

4 August 2016

Dear Mr Maung

**Pre-application Advice**

**UCL WILKINS MAIN QUAD, GOWER STREET, WC1E 6BT**

Thank you again for involving Historic England in pre-application discussions regarding a proposed temporary building within the main quad of the Wilkins Building at the UCL Bloomsbury Campus.

The Proposed Development

As explained during our site visit last Wednesday, the temporary structure is proposed to relieve the shortfall in teaching facilities at UCL which is partly a result of the disruption created by the construction works for the Bloomsbury Campus Masterplan. A temporary marquee-type structure has already been assembled on site at the north side of the quad, with a removal date of August 2017. This current proposal seeks to replace this structure with a more robust and accommodating building with a temporary permission lasting until July 2020. The proposed new building would be two storeys in height and located behind a tree screen at the south-west corner of the quad.

Historic England's Position

The Wilkins Building is Grade I listed, and its Classically-arranged orthogonal layout lies at the heart of its architectural significance. This is particularly discernible when entering the main quad from Gower Street. Therefore any proposal which could change this architectural character is sensitive to us. Although the proposed teaching facility would be located off the main axes through the main quad and would be partially screened by trees, it would nonetheless have an impact on the sense of space and geometry, and visually conceal many architectural features of interest in this focal part of the listed complex.

Therefore this proposal must be supported by clear and convincing justification as is required under Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). We recognise the challenges that the construction and refurbishment works across the



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UCL estate has put on the existing teaching provision and this does provide some justification. However, it needs to be fully explained why a temporary structure in the main quad, which is one of the most significant parts of the UCL Campus, is the only suitable solution. The document also suggests that there might be a shortfall of learning space in the longer-term, and it would be helpful if the submission could include reassurances that no further temporary structures within the quad would be proposed in the future to address this shortage.

In the event of harm being caused to the significance of the Wilkins Building, it would also be helpful if any heritage-related public benefits of the proposals could be set out in the future submission, as is required under Paragraph 134 of the NPPF. This could potentially include the interpreting of the Wilkins Building's Corinthian features to the building facade as is suggested in the pre-application documentation.

Finally, further information on the elevational treatments, including samples, should be provided at an early stage. These should be high quality and sufficiently robust to last the three year period without any noticeable deterioration.

**Next Steps**

We would welcome the opportunity to comment again at pre-application stage once more detailed information has been provided. In the meantime, I would be happy to discuss the advice provided if you require any clarification.

Yours sincerely



Alasdair Young  
Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas  
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