

Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

11 July 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

UCL: Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H 0NN Application for Full Planning Permission

On behalf of our client, University College London (UCL) (the 'Applicant'), we hereby submit to the London Borough of Camden an application for Full Planning Permission for the installation of plant equipment on the second floor of the above address. The proposals also include two related louvre installations on an external elevation. The description of development is:

"New ventilation plant and related louvre."

Background

UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with over 11,000 staff and nearly 40,000 students. It was ranked seventh in the QS World University Rankings 2016/17 and provides excellence and leadership in teaching and research.

The University is embarking on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment of its Bloomsbury Campus. An estate-wide masterplan (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/masterplan>) sets out a vision for the long term development and improvement of the core Campus over the next ten to fifteen years. The 10 year Capital Programme will see investment of c. £1.3bn in the UCL estate. The masterplan identifies a range of projects to deliver this vision and the best possible teaching, learning and living environment for its students.

The University is currently facing a shortage of teaching space, which is expected to increase in years to come. Whilst UCL have merged with Institute of Education (IoE) at 20 Bedford Way since the publication of the masterplan, five years of extensive works are required to redevelop the site, during which many existing teaching spaces will not be available for use. As there are refurbishment works ongoing across the wider UCL estate, there will be a significant shortfall in teaching floor space.

It is now proposed that part of the second floor of the University's Central House building (Use Class B1/D1) is converted for use as teaching space. Whilst this would only require minimal internal alterations, it would contribute some teaching space for the university, whilst also providing a new student hub and breakout area. External alterations are limited to just two louvre installations.

Site Location and Description

The application site is on the eastern side of the UCL Bloomsbury Campus, and is located on Upper Woburn Place. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses in line with its Central London Location, including the Ambassadors Bloomsbury Hotel adjacent to the south and Hilton Euston Hotel on the opposite side of Upper Woburn Place (Use Class C1). Also in close proximity is the St. Pancras Parish Church to the north (Use Class D1) and residences (Use Class C3). On the nearby Endsleigh Street are UCL student residences (sui generis Use Class) and Bentham House (Use Class D1).

The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Sub-area 13: 'Cartwright Gardens/Argyle Square'). Central House is not listed. In close proximity are a number of listed buildings, including the St. Pancras Parish Church (Grade I) 20m to the north, the 'Cora Hotel' (now Hilton Euston) (Grade II) 23m to the west, numbers 1-9 Woburn Walk (Grade II*) adjacent to the south, and numbers 2-16 Duke's Road (Grade II*) adjacent to the east.

Planning History

Central House has been subject to several planning applications in recent years. Details of applications of relevance to the current application proposals are set out below.

Application Reference	Address	Description	Status
2010/3891/P	Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place	Alternative use of the building as either offices (Class B1) or higher educational uses (Class D1). External alterations including erection of renewable energy panels and replacement plant equipment at roof level.	Granted (October 2010)
2007/5570/P	Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place & 10 Dukes Road	Erection of 1st-5th floors side extension on south side of Central House to provide additional Class B1 office space, addition of a staircase and lift enclosures on roof and new roofplant with associated acoustic enclosure, plus ground floor fenestration alterations on front elevation; change of use of 10 Dukes Road from Class B1 to a 4 bedroom self-contained unit (Class C3) and ancillary B1 floorspace.	Granted (May 2008)
2007/5571/L	Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place & 10 Dukes Road	Internal alterations to 10 Dukes Road in association with the part change of use from office (Class B1) to a 4 bedroom self-contained unit (Class C3) and ancillary office floor space (Class B1).	Granted (May 2008)
PS9805056R1	Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place	The retention of one piece of air conditioning plant at roof level, to serve the fifth floor computer room, together with the installation of one additional air conditioning unit to serve the third floor computer room, as an amendment to the planning permission for new roof plant granted on 20th February 1998 (Ref PS9705186R1), as shown by drawing numbers 8-172-08 & Q1762/M/109.	Granted (February 1999)
PS9705186R1	Central House, 14 Upper Woburn Place	The installation of air conditioning plant and the provision of handrails at roof level. (as shown on drawing nos. 96010/08, 09, 10 & 11; document of dimensional drawings; document ref C1/SfB (37) dated August 1997; and Technical Report ref 853)	Granted (February 1998)

Proposed Development

The proposals relate to the eastern half of the second floor of the building, which is currently used as open plan office space. It is proposed that a large proportion of this part of the building is reconfigured to create a large 130m² room for teaching, which would accommodate 91 seats and one wheelchair space. In addition to the much-needed teaching space, it is proposed that a smaller part of this floor is reconfigured to create a student hub, breakout area and small store room. The new student hub and breakout area would be adjacent to the new teaching space.

In order to enable the use of this new teaching space, a new single internal ventilation plant unit is required and proposed. This would be located in a new plant room on the same floor, which would be adjacent to an also-proposed new circulation room. This new circulation room would provide the only access to the plant room.

To ensure that the new plant has the necessary ventilation, it is proposed that two windows on an external façade are removed and replaced with louvre. These windows are located on a west-facing façade, which overlooks an internal light well located to the south of the building. Due to the location of these new louvre units, and the inward facing nature of the façade, they are not visible from street level. The nature of the installations also mean that these works would be completely reversible.

In summary, the proposals allow the creation of much-needed teaching space with the benefit of only requiring limited alterations to the building.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises the London Plan (2016) and the Camden Local Plan (2017). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are also material considerations.

The following policy designations apply to the site:

- Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Policy D2);
- Central London Area (Policy G1); and,
- Designated View - 5A.2 Greenwich Park Wolfe statue to Tower Bridge - Right Lateral Assessment Area.

The main planning considerations in relation to this application are summarised below.

Planning Policy Considerations

Design and Conservation

The relevant design and conservation policies are as follows:

Policy D1: Design – *this policy seeks to ensure that development is of a high quality design and respects local context and character. It is also noted that development should accord with Policy D2, comprises materials that are of high quality and carefully integrates building services equipment.*

Policy D2: Heritage - *this policy maintains the need to protect Camden's heritage assets, and states that the council will not permit any development which results in the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. It also recognises the need to consider the relative weight of public benefits when assessing development proposals which results in substantial harm to listed buildings. It is also emphasised that the council will resist any alterations or extensions which would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of a listed building.*

Applicant Response

As previously outlined, Central House is not a listed building, but does sit within the Bloomsbury Conservation area. Furthermore, there are a number of listed buildings in close proximity to the building, meaning the impact of the proposals on the Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings should be considered.

The external design implications of these proposals can be considered to be minimal, partly due to the location of the two windows which are to be removed. These two windows, which provide direct ventilation to the necessary plant, are located on an inward facing elevation which overlooks an existing light well. Their location means that the high quality, matching colour, aluminium louvres which will be installed in their place will not be visible from street level. This allows the proposals to have a significantly reduced impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Furthermore, their location also means that they will not be visible from nearby Listed Buildings, such as the Hilton Euston Hotel and St. Pancras Parish Church. This subsequently enables a reduced impact on the setting of any nearby listed buildings, as well as a reduced visual impact for users of nearby non-listed buildings.

Noise

The relevant noise policy is considered below:

Policy A4: Noise and vibration – this policy sets out Camden’s aims to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed, and states that they will not grant planning permission for development likely to generate unacceptable noise and vibration impacts. The policy also states that the council will only grant permission for noise-generating development, including any plant and machinery, if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity.

Applicant Response

Attention has been given to the proximity of neighbouring buildings and occupiers, and a Plant Noise Impact Assessment has been produced in accordance with Camden Policy.

The report identifies that the nearest noise sensitive receptor is the Ambassadors Hotel, which too overlooks the courtyard and light well area to the south of Central House. It also states that all other noise sensitive receptors in the area are at a much greater distance from the proposed new ventilation plant, and will be protected by the screening effectively provided by intervening structures. Noise in the area is said to be dominated by the plant serving the neighbouring hotel.

The Noise Report submitted with the application includes details of the proposed installation, and the noise impact this is likely to have. It concludes that the predicted noise levels will meet the requirements of the Local Authority during all periods of operation and at the closest noise sensitive receptors. It is therefore also possible to conclude that the proposals will not cause harm to the neighbouring amenity, as set out in Camden policy requirements.

Please refer to the Noise Report submitted in support of this application for further information.

Application Submission

In addition to this covering letter and policy assessment, this application comprises and is supported by the following documents:

- Application Forms and Certificates (prepared by Deloitte);
- Plant Noise Impact Assessment (prepared by Environmental Equipment Corporation Ltd);
- Site and Location Plan – S437A_L_100_T1 (prepared by Levitt Bernstein); and
- Existing and proposed drawings (prepared by Levitt Bernstein):

- Existing:
 - 3437 - L - 105 (2nd Floor Existing Plan)
 - 3437 - L - 240 (Existing Elevation)
- Proposed:
 - 3437A - L - 120 (2nd Floor Proposed -GA)
 - 3437 - L - 250 (Proposed Elevation)

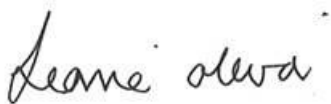
The application fee of £385.00 will be paid via cheque under separate cover.

Summary

This application seeks planning permission for a new ventilation plant and louvre at Central House, a UCL-occupied building currently used for Class D1 - academic and Class B1 - office uses. The proposals would enable the conversion of part of Central House to be converted to higher education teaching space, thereby helping to meet a pressing need for UCL. The proposals accord and contribute to planning policy at all levels and should be granted planning permission.

We trust that you have all the information you need to validate the application. Should you have any queries or require any further information, then please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Phil Wright (020 7303 6106 / phiwright@deloitte.co.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Leonie Oliva
Deloitte LLP

ENCS.