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Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
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Your ref: PP-07201377

Dear Ms Powell,

University College London: Pearson Building, Gower Street, LONDON, WC1E 6BT Application for Listed Building Consent

On behalf of our client, University College London (UCL) (the 'Applicant'), we hereby submit to the London Borough of Camden an application for Listed Building Consent for minor internal alterations to entrance lobby of the Pearson Building to create a common room and a lecture space. The description of development is:

"Minor internal alterations to the Ground Floor entrance lobby of the Pearson Building, including the addition of a new modern partition and redecoration works to create a staff and student common room and new teaching space"

Background

UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with over 11,000 staff and nearly 40,000 students. It was ranked tenth in the QS World University Rankings 2019 and provides excellence and leadership in teaching and research. UCL is also among the top 20 universities ranked by The Times (16) and The Guardian (7).

UCL competes on a global stage with other top-rank universities overseas (such as Harvard, Yale and Stanford) and in the UK (such as Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial College). In order to attract the best graduate researchers and academic staff and the brightest undergraduates it is essential to be able to offer world class facilities and a high quality environment. In recent years, the University has embarked on an ambitious programme of renovation and redevelopment across its sites, and is continuing to do so in order to offer exemplary teaching facilities.

Site Location and Description

The application site is on the western side of the UCL Bloomsbury Campus, and is located on the corner of Gower Place and Gower Street. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of uses in line with its Central London Location. In the immediate vicinity of the site, the area is characterised by buildings in D1 use reflecting its location at the core of UCL's Bloomsbury Campus. Other nearby uses include University College Hospital, Euston Square train station, hotels and retail.

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The Pearson Building is Grade I-listed by virtue of its forming part of the historic UCL Wilkins Building, comprising the Main Quad and North and South Wings (list entry number: 1113056). There are a number of other listed buildings in close proximity including two Grade II-listed observatories located within the quadrangle (list entry number: 1113064), Grade II-listed 23 Gower Place (list entry number: 1322168), and the Grade II-listed Kathleen Lonsdale Building (list entry number: 1322169).

The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, within Sub Area 3, 'London University/British Museum'.

The application relates to the ground floor entrance lobby of the building only. The existing lobby is presented in relatively modern finished and has been much altered since its initial conception and construction.

Relevant Planning History

The table below the application site's planning history. It demonstrates that there have been a number of applications for minor works to the building historically which have included the addition of new mechanical plant, and refurbishment works.

Application Reference	Description	Status
2016/4517/L	The addition of four fan coil units along with associated redecoration and repair to the ceiling and soffit at the Pearson Building	Granted – 11/11/2016
2007/3229/P	Installation of air conditioning plant and support platform on the roof of the existing single storey extension to the rear of the building.	Granted – 05/10/2007
2007/1586/L	Refurbishment of a lecture theatre within a university building (Class D1)	Granted – 15/06/2007
2004/2664/L	Internal and external works of refurbishment including installation of low level glazing and disabled access ramp to the ground floor east elevation of Pearson Building (Class D1), formation of new openings in building fabric, removal of partitions, installation of new partitions and secondary glazing. Installation of roof top plant is also proposed.	Granted – 23/12/2004
LS9905131	Alterations to the internal partitions with partial demolition, as shown on drawing numbers 950/08/01 & 3/108/03A.	Granted 08/03/2000

Proposed Development

The proposals relate to the lobby area of the ground floor of the Pearson Building, and are necessary to provide improved and quality teaching and common room spaces.

It is proposed that an existing office (labelled 'G02 Office' on plan SLASH18/19 PRJT4 EX-01 Rev B) is refurbished and converted to be a teaching space with unfixed desks. This will require the blocking up of a door which currently accesses an equipment room, the relocation of existing fixed benching and the removal of spur shelving. In addition to this, the walls and ceiling will be repainted, the existing carpet cleaned and new blinds installed. A fixed TV would be installed with an associated power supply.

An existing staff area (labelled 'G03 Staff Area on plan SLASH18/19 PRJT4 EX-01 Rev B) is proposed to be enlarged to provide a new staff and student common room. To do so, the existing partition would be removed and a new glazed partition installed. In addition to this the room would be subject to the repainting of the walls and ceiling, installation of new blinds, and a carpet clean. Additional power sockets would be installed, along with an acoustic panel on the walls, the reinstatement of an existing fan coil unit and installation of a new fixed TV with associated power source.

Please see the submitted drawings for additional information.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan primarily comprises the London Plan (2016) and the Local Plan (2017). In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are of material consideration. The draft London Plan (2017) is also of material consideration.

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 (Camden Local Plan, 2017) – *this policy emphasizes the need for development to preserve or enhance heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2, as well as comprise details and materials that of high quality and which are inclusive and accessible to all.*

Policy D2: Heritage (Camden Local Plan, 2017) – *this policy outlines the need to protect Camden’s heritage assets. 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 and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.*

Paragraph 196 of the revised NPPF (2018) explains that *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use"*.

Both Policy 7.8, Heritage assets and archaeology, of the adopted London Plan (2016) and Policy HC1, Heritage conservation and growth, of the draft London Plan (2017) state that development proposals which affect heritage assets should conserve their significance, and that proposals should do so by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Applicant Response

The proposals have been carefully considered so as to optimise the provision of student facilities within the existing lobby area of the Pearson Building. This space is currently underused, and so the works to reconfigure and refurbish the space to provide a new common room area and teaching space will optimise the use of this educational building. Doing so would greatly improve the experience and usability of this part of the building for both teaching staff and students.

The existing space has a lack of original features and, as a result, historic fabric. This was observed in discussions with the Camden Conservation Officer, Antonia Powell, where concerns were not raised due to the lobby space already been much altered with modern finishes. Furthermore, the existing partition is also modern, meaning there is again no concern related to its removal.

For each of the proposed works to the Pearson Building, every effort has been made to minimise the impact to any existing fabric. Where any changes are required, only high quality design and materials will be used. In addition, the alterations to the layout have been minimised. Furthermore, in many cases the proposed changes have been formulated to reduce their impact on features of historic interest. The use of loose furniture in both rooms, for example, is non-invasive and non-permanent in nature, and works including carpet cleans and wall and ceiling cleaning will enhance and protect existing features.

The proposals will enable a number of technology-related changes which, by allowing modern technology to support vital teaching activities, are integral to improving the teaching offering of UCL departments including Geography, Earth Sciences and Civil Environmental and Geomatic Engineering.

Higher Education

Policy 3.18: Education Facilities (London Plan, 2016) – *this policy outlines the Mayor’s support of higher education facilities and their ability to adequately meet the demands of a growing and changing population. The policy also explains that in the case of planning decisions, development proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported.*

Policy C2: Community facilities (Camden Local Plan, 2017) – *this policy outlines the Council’s support for the investment plans of educational bodies to expand and enhance their operations, and highlights the social and economic benefits such bodies generate for Camden, London and the UK.*

Applicant Response

The proposals described here are important in enhancing the education facilities and in doing so support Policy 3.18 of the London Plan. The existing spaces and technology in the two mentioned rooms in the Pearson Building are in need of updating, which these proposals will allow, if the facility is to adequately meet the demands of its users. The proposals are also in accordance with Policy C2 of the Camden Local Plan, as their implementation will enhance the operations of this floor in the Pearson Building, as well as the related student experience.

Due to the nature of the changes, it is considered that the proposals described here will not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building. This is due to the existing space being one which has already been subject to a great number of alterations, meaning much fabric is of a modern rather than historical type. Further to this, the proposals will bring a great number of benefits to both staff and students by providing an enhanced teaching space and expanded common room facilities.

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);
- Site Location Plan (prepared by Levitt Bernstein);
- Existing and proposed drawings (prepared by Arcadis):
 - Existing:
 - SLASH18/19 PRJT4 EX-01 Rev B - Pearson Building GF Refurbishment As Existing Plan
 - SLASH18/19 PRJT4 PROP-02 Rev B - Pearson Building GF Refurbishment Existing Elevation
 - Proposed:
 - SLASH18/19 PRJT4 PROP-04 Rev B – Pearson Building GF Refurbishment (Plan)
 - SLASH18/19 PRJT4 PROP-03 Rev B – Pearson Building GF Refurbishment Proposed Elevation

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline at the end.

John Adams
Deloitte LLP