



For the attention of John Diver

**Re: Wilkins Building, Gower St, WC1E 6HJ
Listed Building Consent reference: 2019/0066/L
Full Planning Permission reference: 2018/6233/P**

The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (LAMAS) promotes London's archaeology, local history and historic buildings. The LAMAS Historic Buildings and Conservation Committee reviews applications for listed building consent and seeks to ensure a sustainable future for vital aspects of London's built heritage.

The Committee reviewed the documents for the above application at its meetings on Tuesday, 22nd January 2019, and made the following observations:

- The proposal is for the demolition and reconstruction of an existing bridge and the creation of a second bridge. If it is considered necessary to rebuild the existing bridge this part of the proposal is considered acceptable. The creation of the second bridge is, however, a totally different matter.
- The proposal involves the destruction of important historic fabric in changing a Wilkins Building window into a doorway. This, and the creation of a second bridge would totally destroy the balance of this face of the building especially when viewed from the level of the Japanese garden.
- Paragraph 194 of the NPPF stipulates '*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset ... should require clear and convincing justification*'. The Wilkins Building forms part of University College (University of London), listed by Historic England as Grade I (List Entry number 1113056), and therefore a designated heritage asset of the highest national importance. Accordingly, the impacts of any proposed development must be assessed with this in mind.
- The Committee was particularly concerned that the applicant had attempted to justify the despoiling of a magnificent building face by the prior decision to create a new Student Centre. It is the duty of those who are entrusted with great buildings to evaluate in advance the effect of their decisions. Their failure to calculate the effect of the creation of this facility does not justify the loss of a fine building's balance.

The Committee was of the opinion that the applicant had failed to appreciate the significance of the Wilkins building as a nationally-listed building as a full and thorough assessment of the impact of the proposed alterations has not been undertaken. Therefore, in view of the requirements of NPPF paragraph 194, the Committee strongly recommends that Listed Building Consent and Full Planning consent be refused.

Vicki Fox (Hon. Secretary)

LAMAS – Historic Buildings & Conservation Committee

25 January 2019