

HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of:

Refurbishment and Extension of Sixth Form Centre

At:

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL, FROGNAL, HAMPSTEAD,
LONDON, NW3 6XH**

On behalf of:

University College School

March 2019



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement accompanies an **application for planning permission** for the refurbishment and extension of the Sixth Form Centre at University College School, an independent day school containing several listed buildings.
- 1.2 The school campus occupies a substantial site on the east side of Frognal, a long thoroughfare in west Hampstead that runs from Finchley Road in the south to Frognal Rise in the north. The proposals relate to the 1970s Sixth Form Centre (aka the Kent Building) at the southern end of the campus.

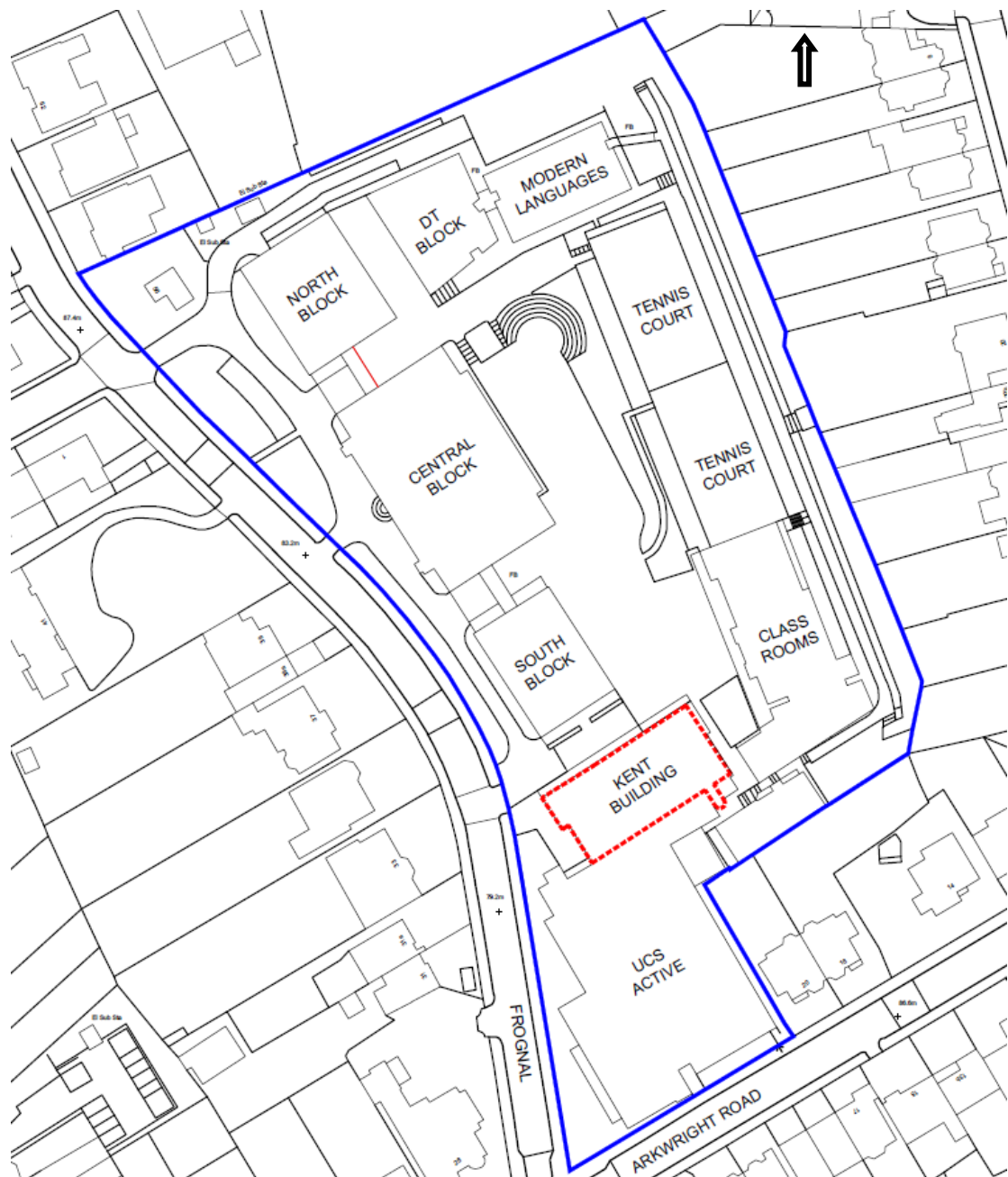


Fig.1 Site location

- 1.3 The report describes the heritage significance of University College School, with a particular focus on the southern end of the campus where the development is proposed, and provides an assessment of the impact of the proposals in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF, February 2019) and in order to meet the council's local validation checklist for applications affecting listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 1.4 The report was commissioned by University College School and has been prepared by Elaine Milton BSc (Hons) MSc DipArchCons MRTPI IHBC. A site survey was carried out on 27 February 2019.
- 1.5 An assessment of setting has been undertaken using the Historic England guidance *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3, December 2017), which recommends a five-step approach to analysis.
- 1.6 Information on the history of the site has been drawn from a number of sources, including historical map regression. A list of the sources is presented on p25.

2.0 Heritage Designations

2.1 University College School was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* at **Grade II on 14 May 1974**. It is therefore deemed by Historic England to be a designated heritage asset of national importance and of special interest. The list entry for the property reads as follows:

'Public school. 1906-7. By Arnold Mitchell, built by Dove Brothers; much of main block destroyed by fire 1978 but restored virtually in facsimile by Michael Foster. Brown brick with stone dressings; rusticated red brick and stone pilasters. Slated hipped roof over central block with central copper domed lantern flanked by stone cupolas at base of hips. STYLE: Edwardian Baroque. EXTERIOR: symmetrical design with 2 storey centre and flanking blocks linked by peristyles. Central block, 12 window centre plus 1 window recessed end bays; wings with 7 and 8 windows. Main entrance of 7 windows and ground floor colonnade flanked by rusticated pilasters with carved cartouche capitals. Central round-arched entrance with attached columns supporting elaborately carved broken scrolled pediment with festoons and central cartouche; part-glazed panelled double doors. Above this a carved statue of Edward VII in an elaborate aedicule with carved feature above. Grouped architraved sashes with cornices, central windows ground floor with segmental pediments, 1st floor have triangular pediments with keystones. Parapet. The pilasters to the central block originally terminated in tall similarly rusticated chimneys. Wings have pilastered outer bays supporting broken pediments with carved cartouches above 1st floor sashes with broken pediments and keystones and ground floor windows with broken segmental pediments and keystones. Inner bays have ground floor sashes with keystones in broken pediments and upper floor oculi set in carved festoons, the drops linking to pediments beneath. Cornice and parapets. INTERIOR: has main hall with barrel-vaulted moulded plaster ceiling having Diocletian windows and wooden panelled walls with continuous 1st floor galley. The River Westbourne flows under the school in a specially built crypt. HISTORICAL NOTE: the pilasters to the central block originally terminated in tall similarly rusticated chimneys.'

2.2 Also listed are the school porter's lodge to the north-west of the main school building and the gates and railings to the school, which are all c.1906-7 by Arnold Mitchell and listed at Grade II. The buildings are noted in the list entries for their contribution to **group value**.

- 2.3 There are several listed buildings on the west side of Frognal opposite the school, including Nos. 1 & 2 and Nos. 5 & 6 Frognal Close (a mid-20th century development by Ernest Freud) and Nos. 39 & 39A Frognal (a late 19th century house by Richard Norman Shaw).
- 2.4 University College School is within the **Redington/Frognal Conservation Area**, which was first designated by the local authority on 1 June 1985 and reviewed several times between 1988 and 2003. The conservation area covers a large area of sloping land to the west and south-west of the historic centre of Hampstead Village. University College School falls within the southern part of the conservation area, the earliest designated section in 1985.

3.0 Description

3.1 University College School comprises a **purpose-built group of school buildings** within a campus on the east side of Frognal. The buildings are set back from and bounded with the road by cast iron railings on low brick walls with stone piers and cast iron entrance gates.



Fig.2 View through entrance gates to Central Block

3.2 The school comprises **three blocks built in the Edwardian Baroque style**, each of two/three-storeys in a linear arrangement and connected by covered walkways. The buildings are constructed in brown brick with Ham stone dressings, and have rusticated red brick and stone pilasters. The central block, which was largely destroyed by fire in 1978 but restored in facsimile, has a central arched entrance, elaborately carved broken scroll pediment with festoons and a cartouche, and the building is topped with a central copper domed lantern. Inside the central block is the impressive main assembly hall (see Fig.14).

3.3 There are flanking wings to the north and south of Central Block, known as North Block and South Block. The east and west facades, which are of seven bays, are symmetrical and mirror images. Both blocks have pilastered outer bays supporting broken pediments with carved cartouches. The inner bays have, at upper ground floor level sash windows with keystones in broken pediments and at first floor, oculi

windows set in carved festoons. There is a row of trees behind the front boundary wall, which partially screens the main school blocks from the road.



Fig.3 South Block as currently seen from road (west facade)

- 3.4 **The Sixth Form Centre** is modern two-storey detached block positioned adjacent to the current main entrance to the school, and to the south of South Block with a two-way vehicular access route between.



Fig.4 Main school entrance - Sixth Form Centre to right

- 3.5 The southernmost part of the Sixth Form Centre comprises a two storey-block, the ground floor of which is constructed in red brick and the first floor in 1970s aluminium-framed curtain walling that is angled at the top to meet a flat roof. The northernmost part of the building comprises a contemporary single-storey brick structure having a parapetted flat roof, with full-height glazing to the ground floor set behind a colonnade. A grey render lift shaft and stairwell projects above the roofline, set back from the parapet.



Fig.5 View of Sixth Form Centre from the north-west on the road

- 3.6 To the north-east of the Sixth Form Centre is the main school parking area.



Fig.6 Sixth Form Centre as seen from north-east within parking area

4.0 History

- 4.1 University College School was founded in Gower Street in 1830 by University College London. Originally located elsewhere, the school moved to **the current school buildings in 1907**, which were purpose-built to designs by Arnold Mitchell. The original drawings have been retained by the school and some of these are presented in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Arnold Mitchell was a Scottish-born architect (b. 1863, d. 1944), who was articled to several high profile London practices in the late 19th century, including Ernest George & Peto.¹ Mitchell went on to design numerous houses in the Arts and Crafts Style, but also a number of public buildings. Other schools designed by Mitchell include Orley Farm School, Harrow (1901) and St Felix School, Southwold (1902).
- 4.3 Mitchell retired in 1926 to Lyme Regis, where he had previously designed an Arts and Crafts seaside ‘tower’ house in 1903, Sundial Cottage on Marine Parade. Interestingly, the house featured the use of south Somerset Ham stone, also used at University College School.
- 4.4 The Kent Building was constructed at the southern end of the campus in 1974 as a theatre and sports centre block².

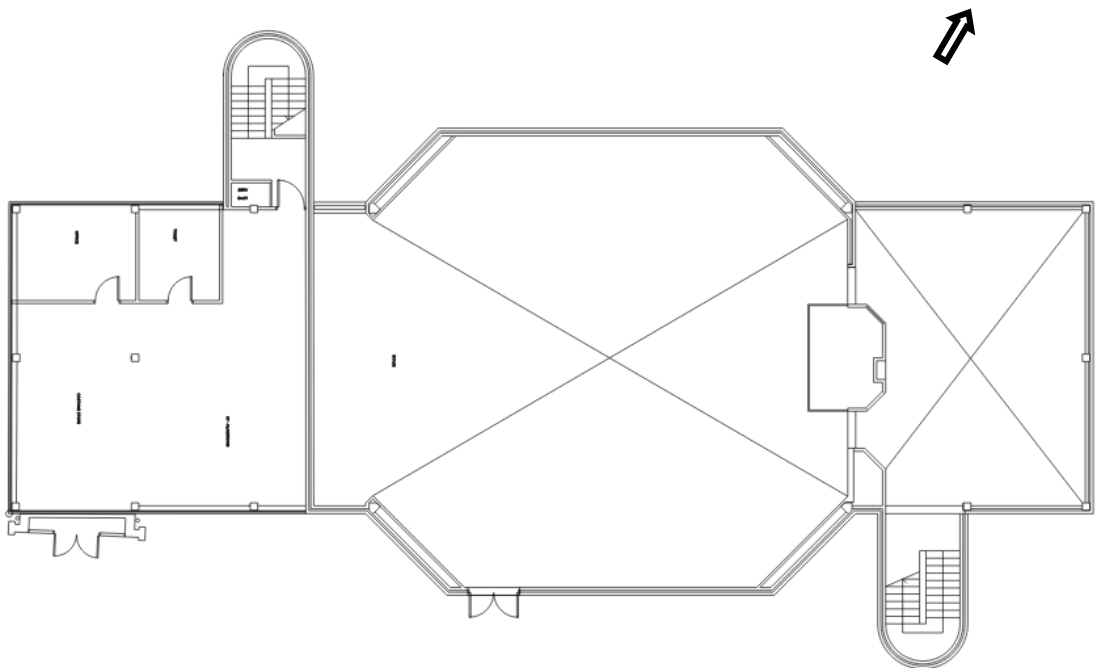


Fig.7 Plan of Sixth Form Centre prior to extension in 2010

¹ Among the most recognised works of Ernest George & Peto are the German-inspired houses in Harrington Gardens and Collingham Gardens, Kensington.

² A plaque within the building says it was opened by HRH The Duke of Kent in May 1974.

- 4.5 In 1978, much of the central block of the school was destroyed by fire. It was subsequently rebuilt as a facsimile, including the *piece de resistance* that is the main assembly hall.



Fig.8 Main assembly hall in the central block, restored post-1978

- 4.6 In 1993, a new music school, lecture theatre, computer laboratory, sports hall, geography block, mathematics school and further classrooms were added. Also in 1993, the double-height gymnasium that had been accommodated on the lower ground and upper ground floors of North Block was split horizontally by the insertion of a floor and it was converted to a library.
- 4.7 **Planning permission was obtained in 2010 for a single-storey colonnaded extension on the north side of the Sixth Form Centre** (application reference **2010/1677/P**). The extension was to provide additional teaching facilities, a reception area, lobby/cafe space for the existing theatre and a roof terrace above. The proposals included for a lift shaft and stairwell constructed in masonry with a grey coloured render finish.
- 4.8 The planning officer's delegated report for the 2010 application stated, '*Given the **scale and the lower roofline** than the original school buildings the extension is **not considered to adversely impact on the setting of the listed school building***'. The report went on to say, '*The proposal is considered to be a high quality piece of architecture which would **substantially enhance the appearance of this portion of the site**. The proposal as a whole, and in particular the creation of a more distinctive*

*reception and removal of the cabin, resolves a number of difficulties in legibility and activity of this portion of the site. The extension is **considered to substantially enhance the interface between the southern block and the original buildings. The form and detailed design are considered appropriate for this prominent location**.*



Fig.9 Photograph of Sixth Form Centre from the road prior to extension in 2010



Fig.10 Current view from the road

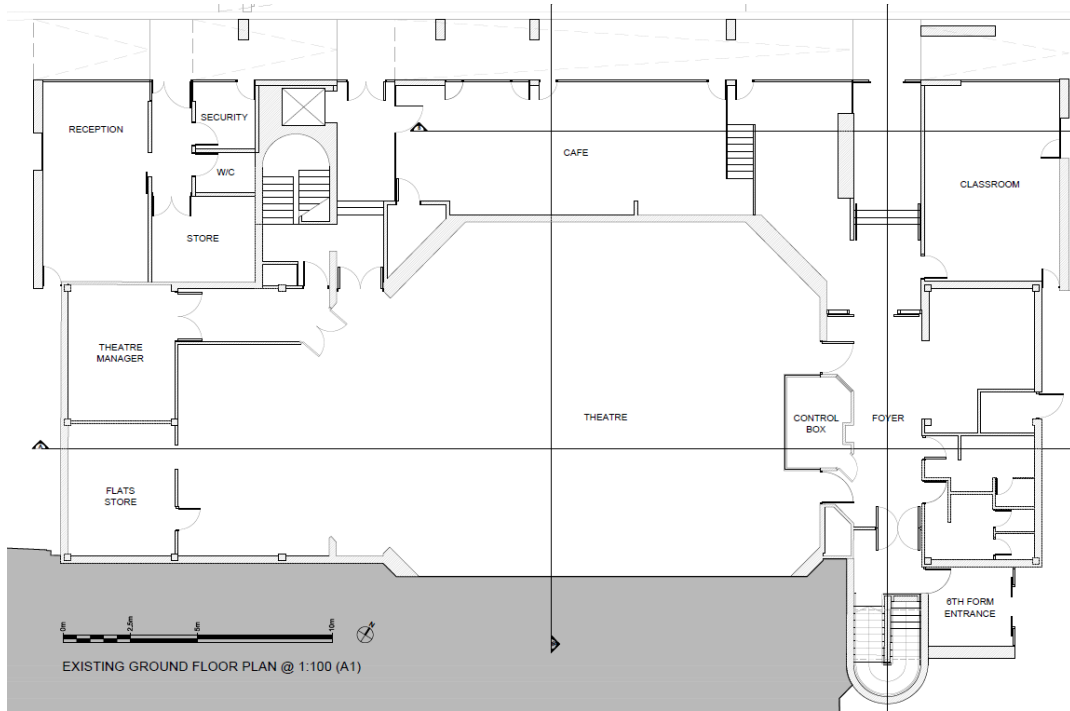


Fig.11 Existing Ground Floor Plan of Sixth Form Centre -2010 colonnaded extension at top

5.0 Assessment of Significance

University College School

- 5.1 Described by Pevsner as the ‘best representation of the early 20th century Baroque style’, University College School is a Grade II listed building, primarily of significance for its architectural and historic interest as **a good example of a purpose-built school constructed in 1906-7 to designs by Arnold Mitchell, a notable architect of the period.**
- 5.2 The school comprises an **impressive set-piece composition** of three linear blocks, a porter’s lodge, cast iron railings and gates, and stone gate piers, which combine to create buildings of good **group value.**
- 5.3 The school buildings are elaborately decorated in brown brick with Ham stone dressings, and with rusticated red brick and Ham stone pilasters. The high level of architectural decoration and detail illustrates the quality and importance of public school buildings of the early 20th century.
- 5.4 The exterior of the **south block is an important element of the architectural set-piece**, creating a flanking wing to the central building. It is individually of **high architectural interest** for its elaborate external decoration, which includes carved Ham stone cartouches, broken segmental pediments and upper floor oculi windows with carved stone festoons.

Contribution Made By Setting

- 5.5 The school is within suburban surroundings having a predominantly late 19th or early 20th century character. The **setting contributes to the significance** of the listed Edwardian school buildings.
- 5.6 The fronts of the listed buildings are seen prominently from the street, and the linear arrangement of the three blocks can be readily appreciated. The front of the site appears open and outward-facing, while the rear is inaccessible and has an enclosed feel. The main area of open space within the campus is to the east of Central Block where the site steps up to a raised terrace along the north-eastern boundary.
- 5.7 The listed buildings are set within a spacious school campus where there is a somewhat ad hoc arrangement of buildings of institutional character in a mix of

architectural styles and ages. There are several contemporary buildings within the site, including the Sixth Form Centre.

- 5.8 Being of lower scale, the Sixth Form Centre is set well below the height of South Block and is separated from it by a two-way vehicular access route. The Sixth Form Centre has an articulated form, which breaks up its massing. Given the lower scale, roof line and massing, and the degree of separation, the Sixth Form Centre appears subservient to South Block and does not adversely impact on the architectural interest of the South Block and the integrity of the linear group of listed buildings.

Contribution to Redington/Frognal Conservation Area

- 5.9 The conservation area is characterised by predominantly late 19th or early 20th century houses within a suburban context. It contains a high number of buildings with high quality detailing and materials, many of which are listed. The northern part of Frognal contains generally large scale buildings set back from the road within spacious plots, creating a sense of openness.
- 5.10 University College School shares common characteristics with the prevailing character and appearance of the conservation area through its form, scale, materials and siting. As such it makes a **positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Redington/Frognal Conservation Area.**
- 5.11 While prominent within the street scene, the scale, massing, form, design and materials of the Sixth Form Centre respect the appearance of the conservation area. The recently constructed colonnaded extension has greatly enhanced the original 1970s block and improved the setting of South Block.
- 5.12 The 1970s aluminium-framed curtain wall glazing of the original part of the Sixth Form Centre appears tired and unattractive.



Fig.12 View from roof of 2010 addition to Sixth Form Centre – 1970s curtain walling to right

6.0 Proposals

6.1 Planning permission is sought for a first floor flat-roofed extension on top of the existing flat roof at the north-eastern end of the Sixth Form Centre to provide cafe seating for around 80 students. The proposed L-shaped structure would be set back from the northern parapet, in line with the recently constructed lift shaft and stairwell addition.

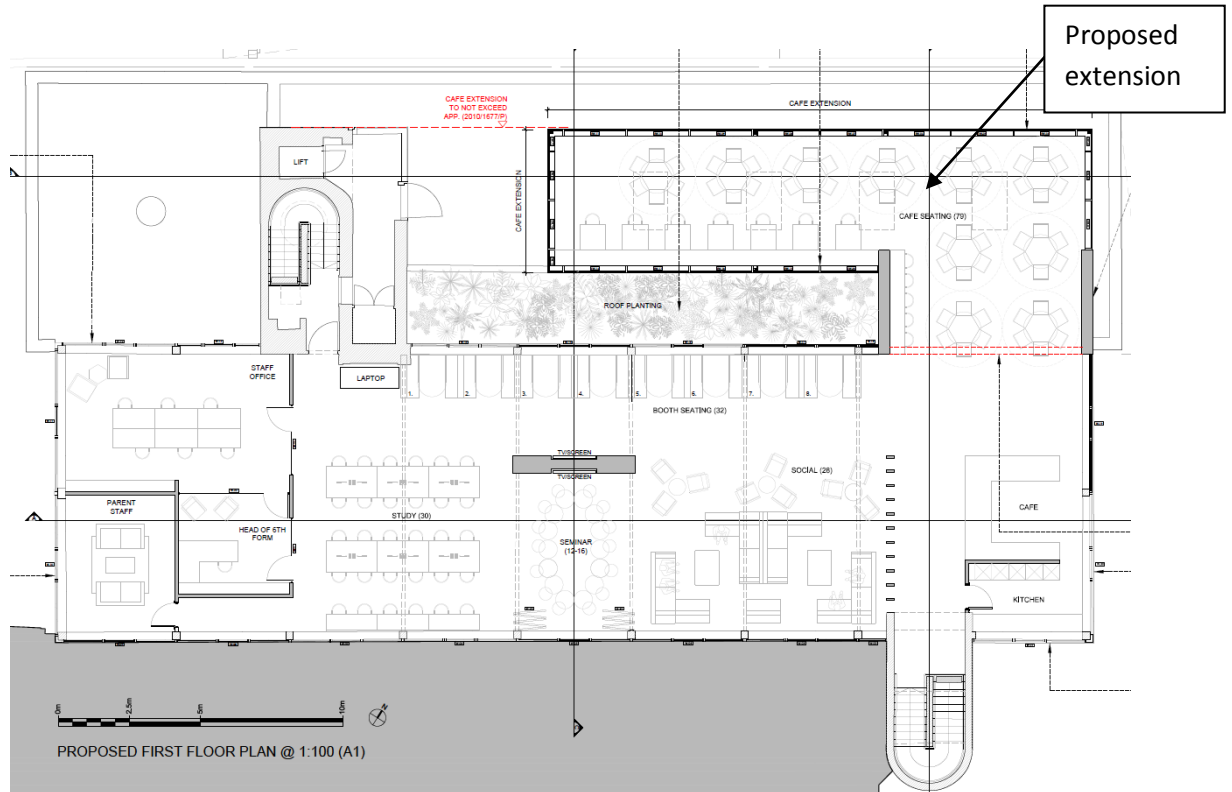


Fig.13 Proposed first floor plan

- 6.2 The proposed extension would mainly have glazed modular curtain walling, with two small sections of masonry walls (with grey coloured render finishes to match the recent lift shaft) where the extension abutts the existing building.
- 6.3 The extension would have a slender profile standing seam single-ply flat roof. The roof would incorporate four flat rooflights.
- 6.4 A roof planting strip would be provided in the gap between the L-shaped extension and the existing building.
- 6.5 The existing 1970s curtain walling would be replaced with glazed modular curtain walling to match the new extension. The existing flat roof would be replaced with standing seam ply, also to match the proposed extension.

6.6 Some internal alterations are proposed to provide an amended layout.

7.0 Policy Context

7.1 A statutory duty exists under **section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

7.2 **Section 72 of the Act** requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

7.3 The statutory duties are reflected in the following policy of the Camden Local Plan, adopted on 3 July 2017:

- **D2 - Heritage.**

7.4 National guidance relating to the historic environment is provided within **section 16 of the NPPF (February 2019)**. It advises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

7.5 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to a heritage asset's significance should require clear and convincing justification, and needs to be weighed against identifiable public benefits. In considering proposals for a heritage asset, the local planning authority should take account of the desirability of sustaining or enhancing its significance and putting it to a viable use consistent with its conservation.

7.6 Paragraph 195 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the proposals should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that this would be outweighed by substantial public benefits or that the development would meet four specific criteria listed therein.

7.7 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF advises where proposals would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.

- 7.8 The **Redington/Frognal Conservation Area Statement** was adopted by the council on 21 January 2003. It provides a description of the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. University College School is within Sub Area 8: Arkwright Road, Frognal, Frognal Close and Lindfield Gardens. Guidelines for new development that preserves or enhances the conservation area are provided on pp19-22 of the Statement, and includes guidance relating to proposals such as extensions, alterations to roofs, landscape treatment etc.
- 7.9 **Policy RF18** of the conservation area statement requires that new development 'should respect the existing built form and historic context of the area, local views, building lines, roof lines, elevational design and where appropriate architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjacent buildings'.
- 7.10 **Policy RF19** advises that in order for modern architectural design to be acceptable it should 'respect and reflect its context...in terms of scale, height, massing and relationship to the street'.
- 7.11 **Policy RF27** advises that due to the variety of roof forms, proposals for roof extensions are assessed on an individual basis. The policy states that a roof extension is *unlikely* to be acceptable where: It would be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building; the property forms part of a symmetrical composition, the balance of which would be upset; the roof is prominent, particularly in long views; or the building is higher than many of its surrounding neighbours and any further roof extension would be likely to be unacceptably prominent.

8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The proposed extension to the Sixth Form Centre would enable the expansion of its currently overcrowded cafe seating area and make efficient use of part of the unused flat roof terrace adjacent to the existing first floor accommodation.
- 8.2 The contemporary design of the proposed development would provide a clear distinction and contrast with the historic buildings on the campus, and would harmonise with the recent contemporary addition to the Sixth Form Centre and the other modern buildings on the site.
- 8.3 Positioned on the north-eastern part of the existing flat roof, the extension would be screened by the main school entrance by the existing masonry stair lift such that the view by the main entrance and from the south would not be affected (see Figs. 13 & 14 below).

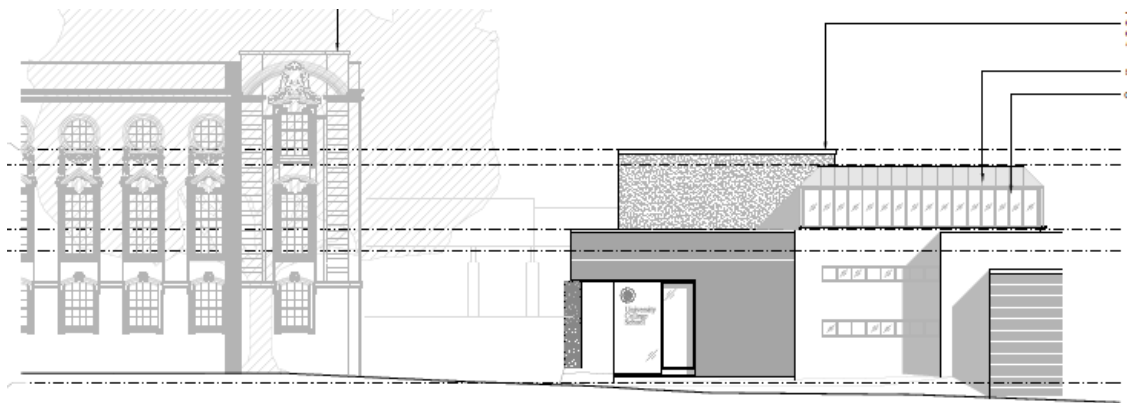


Fig.14 Existing west elevation

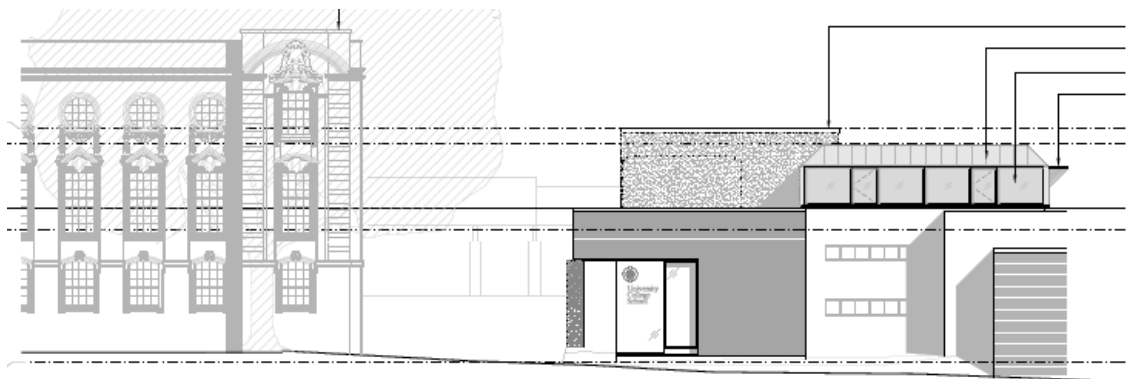


Fig.15 Proposed west elevation

- 8.4 The extension would have a **low impact in views from the north-west** on the road due to its degree of set-back from the building edge, low profile and light-weight appearance. It would also be largely screened by the existing mature willow tree to the west of South Block.

- 8.5 The full-height glazing of the proposed curtain walling for the extension, plus its slender profile ply roof would give the proposed addition an unimposing light-weight ‘floating’ appearance on top of the existing roof.
- 8.6 The proposed extension **would not appear oppressive or overbearing** in views out from South Block, from where the sense of openness would be maintained by the degree of separation and the light-weight glazed nature of the development. The proposed addition would screen the unattractive 1970s first floor element.



Fig.16 View of proposed location for extension from second floor window on south side of South Block

- 8.7 Given that the proposed development would be set back behind the parapet of the colonnaded extension on the same building line as the 2010 lift shaft, and in a similar manner to the officer’s comments on the 2010 application for the colonnaded extension, the proposed addition would have a lower scale and roofline than the original school buildings, the openness at the southern end of the site would be maintained and the development **would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings.**
- 8.8 The proposed development would be of good quality design and detail in keeping with the recently constructed colonnaded extension, and would be appropriate for its location at the southern end of the site.

- 8.9 The building would exhibit high quality finishes and detailing commensurate with the significance of the site. The standing seam ply roof would echo a traditional lead roof.
- 8.10 The 'flat' conservation rooflights would have a low profile, minimising their impact in views of the exterior.
- 8.11 There would be enhancement to the existing building through the replacement of the 1970s curtain walling.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 University College School is a Grade II listed school dating from 1906-7 to designs by Arnold Mitchell. It forms part of a good group of historic buildings and makes a positive contribution to the Redington/Frognal Conservation Area.
- 9.2 The building is formed in three parts: North Block, Central Block and South Block, the heritage significance of which mainly derives from its **architectural style, set-piece design, elaborate decoration and association with a notable architect of the period.**
- 9.3 The proposals relate to a first floor extension of the Sixth Form Centre, above part of a recent extension to a 1970s detached block adjacent to South Block and the school's main entrance.
- 9.4 The extension would be of high quality contemporary design and detail in keeping with the 2010 colonnaded extension on the north side of the building. It would provide good use of an existing area of flat roof to help meet the operational needs of the school.
- 9.5 The extension would have curtain wall glazing, giving it a light- weight appearance. It would be set back from the school's frontage and from the building's parapet, in line with and of the same height as existing structures, such that it would not appear unduly prominent.
- 9.6 As a consequence of the proposed extension's appropriate scale, massing, design, materials and siting, the **setting of the listed buildings would be preserved** and there would be **no harm to their group value or to the character or appearance of the conservation area.**
- 9.7 The proposals would satisfy the requirements of Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan, the policies contained within section 16 of the NPPF and the guidance within the adopted conservation area statement, including the policy relating to rooftop extensions.

Sources Used in the Report

Publications

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, English Heritage (now Historic England), April 2008.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3), Historic England, December 2017.

Designation Listing Selection Guide: Education Buildings, Historic England, December 2017.

Redington/Frognal Conservation Area Statement, Camden Borough Council, 21 January 2003.

Cherry, B. And Pevsner, N., *Buildings of England – London 4: North* (London, 1998).

Websites

Dictionary of Scottish Architects – Arnold Mitchell via
http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=201250
Date accessed: 10 November 2017.

Historic Plans

Original Arnold Mitchell plans for the school, 1905 held by UCS.

APPENDIX 1: ARNOLD MITCHELL'S ORIGINAL PLANS FOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGE SCHOOL



Plate 1: West (front) elevation - South Block on right