

# HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of:

**Proposed refectory atrium**

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 a proposed atrium refectory building 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 part of the site that exists between North Block and the DT Block (aka the Bentham Building).

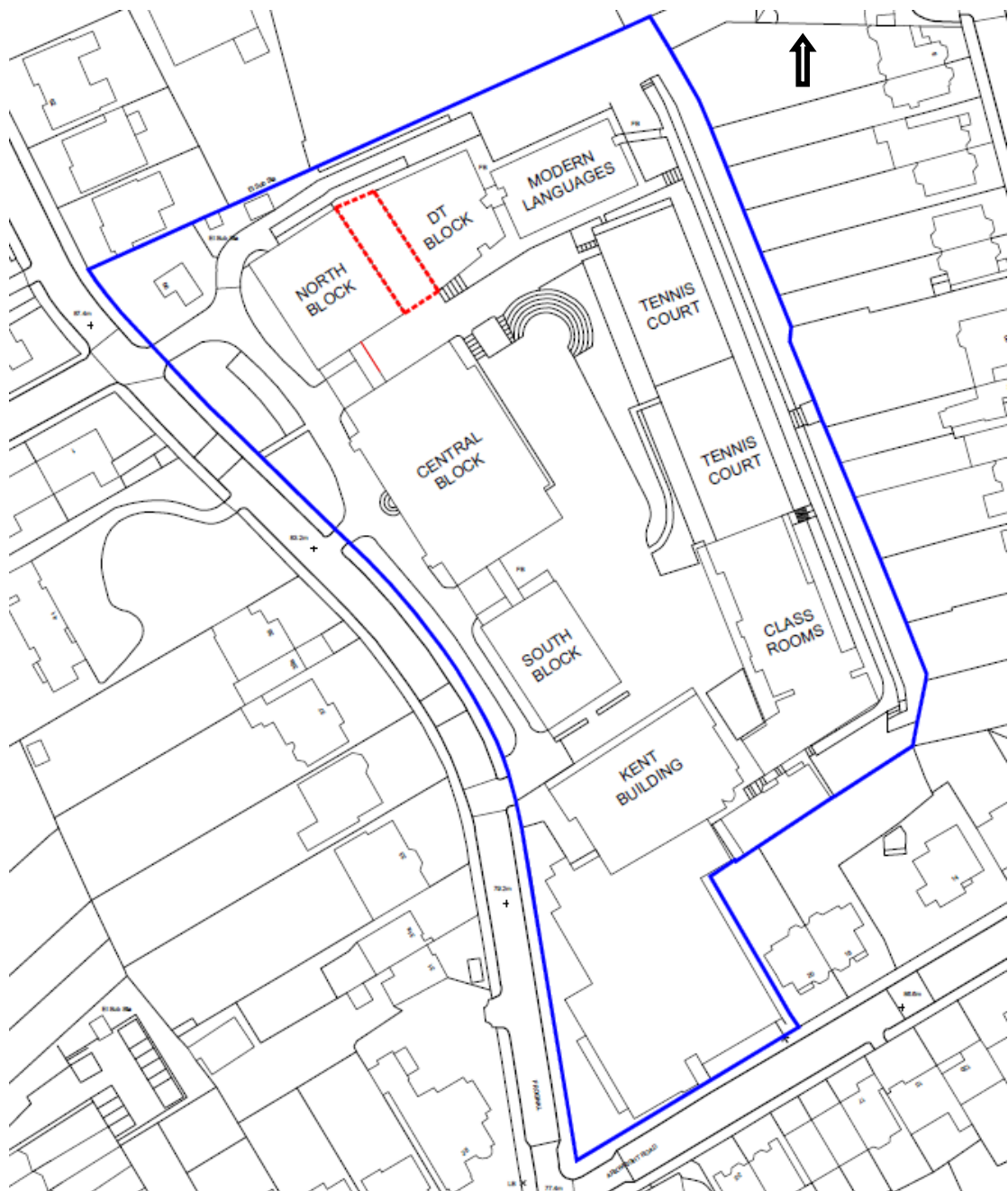


Fig.1 Site location

- 1.3 The report describes the heritage significance of University College School, with a particular focus on the north block, 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 p22.

## 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-20<sup>th</sup> century development by Ernest Freud) and Nos. 39 & 39A Frognal (a late 19<sup>th</sup> 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.



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



*Fig.4 East facade of North Block and adjacent courtyard*





*Fig.5 Close-up view of southern end of east facade of North Block*

- 3.4 The **first floor of North Block** accommodates the Refectory, which comprises a large open-plan dining hall with original wood panelling and wood block flooring.



*Fig.6 Interior of Refectory on first floor of North Block*

- 3.5 The lower ground and upper ground floors of North Block have modern wall, floor and ceiling finishes and accommodate the school library (recently refurbished) and school offices.
- 3.6 There is a **paved courtyard** to the east of North Block, originally intended as a sculpture garden but now effectively dead space. The courtyard is bounded at the west end by a 2m high fence clad in Corten steel.



*Fig.7 Paved courtyard between North Block and Bentham Building*

- 3.7 On the east side of the courtyard is the **Bentham Building**. It is a substantial modern two-storey edifice constructed in brown brick. At ground floor level facing onto the yard is a series of full-height angled bay windows with Corten-clad fins. There are external concrete steps at the southern end of the block providing access to a raised terrace and the first floor.



*Fig.8 Bentham Building*



*Fig.9 Angled bay windows of Bentham Building*

## 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 articulated to several high profiled London practices in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including Ernest George & Peto.<sup>1</sup> 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 A building accommodating the Sixth Form Centre was constructed at the southern end of the campus in 1974 (and extended in a contemporary style on the north side in 2010).



*Fig.10 Contemporary addition to front of Sixth Form Centre*

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

- 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.11 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 The Bentham Building was constructed to the east of North Block in 2008 (see Fig.7).

## 5.0 Assessment of Significance

### University College School

- 5.1 Described by Pevsner as the ‘best representation of the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.4 The exterior of the **north 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. The east and west sides of North Block are mirrored suggesting they were designed to be viewed from both directions.
- 5.5 Internally, while the first floor of the north block (the refectory/dining hall) appears to be intact, the **plan form of the lower ground and upper ground floors are much altered** as a result of the works undertaken in 1993, from the subdivision of the double-height gymnasium and its conversion to a library.

### Contribution Made By Setting

- 5.6 The school is within suburban surroundings having a predominantly late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century character. The **setting contributes to the significance** of the listed Edwardian school buildings.
- 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 imposing Bentham Building to the east of North Block.

- 5.8 While the listed buildings are seen prominently from the street and the linear arrangement of the three blocks readily appreciated, the rear elevations are screened from public view. 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.

### **Contribution to Redington/Frognal Conservation Area**

- 5.9 The conservation area is characterised by predominantly late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.**

## 6.0 Proposals

- 6.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new atrium refectory building within the courtyard to the east of North Block to provide cafe seating for approximately 120 students.

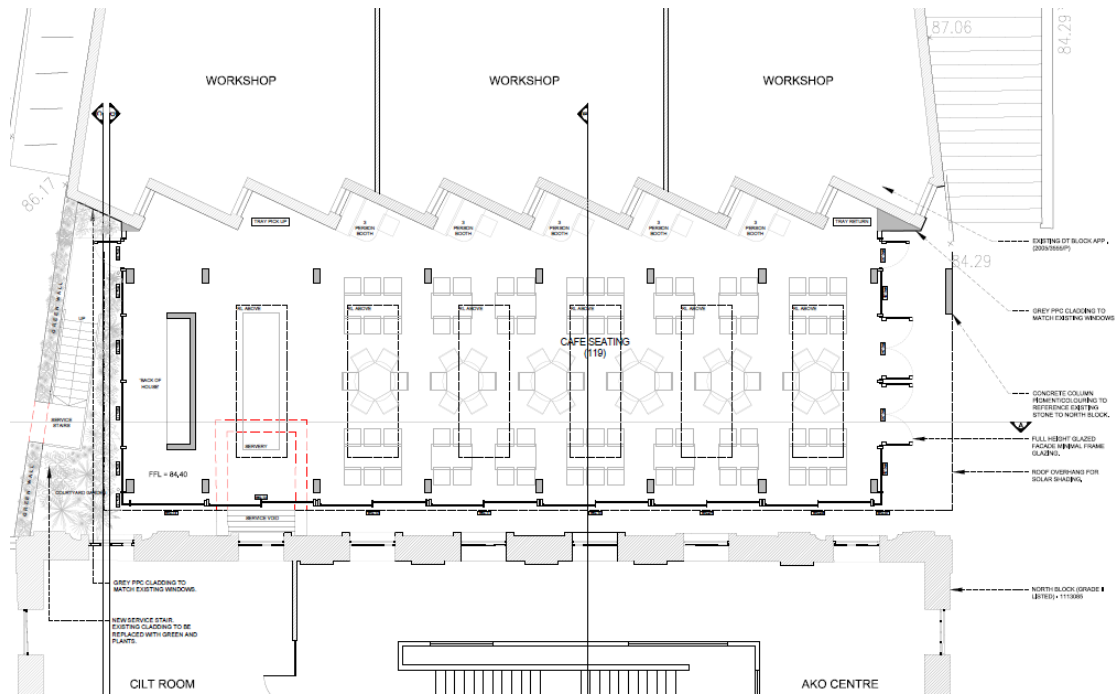
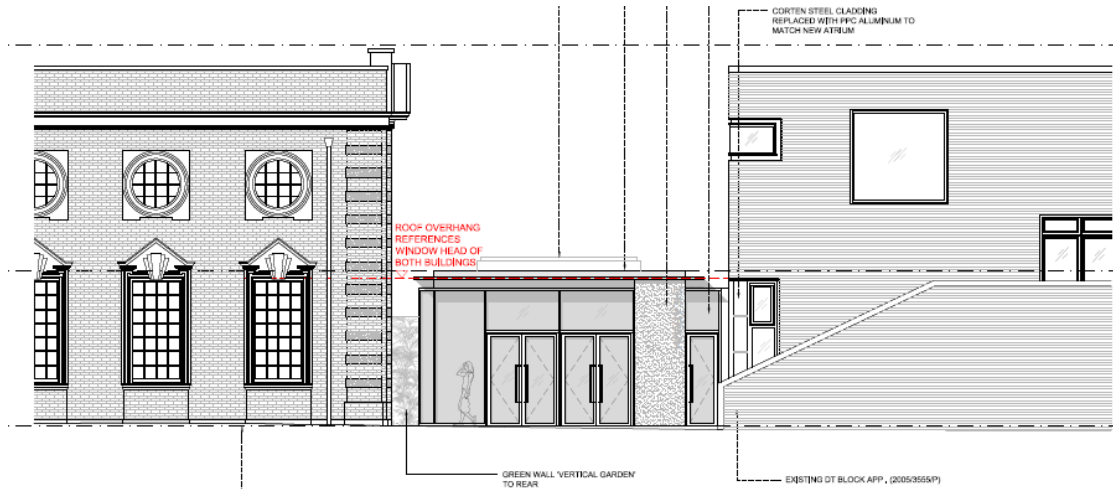


Fig.12 Proposed Ground Floor plan of atrium refectory

- 6.2 The new building would comprise a single-storey single-room flat-roofed structure, independently accessed but attached to the west side of the Bentham Building. It would be separated from the east facade of North Block, which would be left intact, with a gap between for access and maintenance.
- 6.3 The proposed flat roof would have an overhang to the front edge of the courtyard, but the walls of the building would be set back from the southern end of North Block, in line with the first window on the east elevation.
- 6.4 The sides of the building would be formed in full-height glazing within minimal framework. The west elevation would have sliding glass doors while the south front would have two sets of glazed double doors (see Fig.12 below). At the eastern end of the south front would be a solid masonry pier formed in concrete in a pigment to match the existing stone on North Block.
- 6.5 The roof of the proposed building would be covered in a slender profile zinc standing seam in anthracite. It would incorporate a series of six 'flat' conservation rooflights



(similar to those within the recent extension to the school’s Porter’s Lodge). The junction with the Bentham Building would have a glazed roof strip.



*Fig.13 Proposed South Elevation of atrium refectory*

- 6.6 The Corten cladding on the northern boundary would be replaced with a ‘green wall’ and planting. A small courtyard garden would be formed within the space between the boundary and the northern edge of the new building. A service stair adjacent to the northern boundary would provide access into the back of the atrium via the courtyard garden.

## 7.0 Policy Context

- 7.1 Statutory duties exist under **sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** ('the Act') for the local planning authority in considering whether to grant listed building consent or 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/Frogna 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, Frogna, Frogna 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. **Policy RF18** 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’. **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’.

## 8.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The school currently has around 900 students and the Refectory is unable to accommodate the pupils in the restricted lunch break periods. The proposed new building would provide secondary cafe space to relieve pressure on the Refectory and would make use of a currently dead space within the school campus.
- 8.2 The proposed single-storey building would be in a position of low prominence within the rear part of the site, screened in public views by the listed buildings. The new building would respect its context in terms of scale and massing. As such there would be **no harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area**.
- 8.3 The proposed structure would be physically separated from and independent of North Block, resulting in **no harm to or loss of historic fabric**: The proposed building could be removed in future without resulting in permanent damage to any of the historic buildings on the site.
- 8.4 The contemporary design of the proposed development would provide a clear distinction and contrast with the historic buildings on the campus. It would reflect and add to the other contemporary structures on the site.
- 8.5 The fully glazed walls and slender profile single-ply roof of the proposed building would create a minimalist light-weight structure. That combined with the single-storey nature of the building, its low massing and set back from the building line would allow it to appear subservient to the existing two-storey buildings.
- 8.6 The fully glazed walls of the new building would permit views of the east elevation of North Block from within the building itself and from the schoolyard, enabling the North Block to remain on display. The glazed walls and the extent of glazing provided by the rooflights would enable high levels of inter-visibility between North Block and the atrium.
- 8.7 The transparent nature of the new building would not interfere with the integrity or appreciation of the linear linked arrangement of the listed buildings. The first floor windows of the east facade of North Block would remain visible over the top of the flat roof of the new building.
- 8.8 The building would exhibit high quality finishes and detailing commensurate with the significance of the site. The slender profile zinc standing seam in anthracite colour would echo a traditional lead roof.

- 8.9 The ‘flat’ conservation rooflights would have a low profile, minimising their impact in views of the exterior.
- 8.10 The proposed courtyard garden and ‘green wall’ along the northern boundary would introduce soft landscaping to this part of the site. This would create a welcome green space and have a softening effect on the setting of North Block.
- 8.11 Given the general appropriateness of the scale, massing, design, materials, and siting of the proposed building, the **setting of the listed buildings would be preserved.**

## 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/Frogna 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 the redevelopment of an existing courtyard to the east of North Block with a single-storey flat-roofed glazed atrium refectory to supplement the main refectory housed within North Block.
- 9.4 The proposed building would be of innovative contemporary design and would provide good use of a redundant part of the campus to help meet the operational needs of the school.
- 9.5 The new building would be independent of North Block and would not result in harm to or loss of any historic fabric. The integrity and setting of the listed buildings would be maintained.
- 9.6 As a consequence of the proposed building's appropriate scale, massing, design, materials, and siting there would be **no harm to the heritage significance** of the listed buildings, 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.

## 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](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 elevation (Dining Hall Block, now North Block on left)



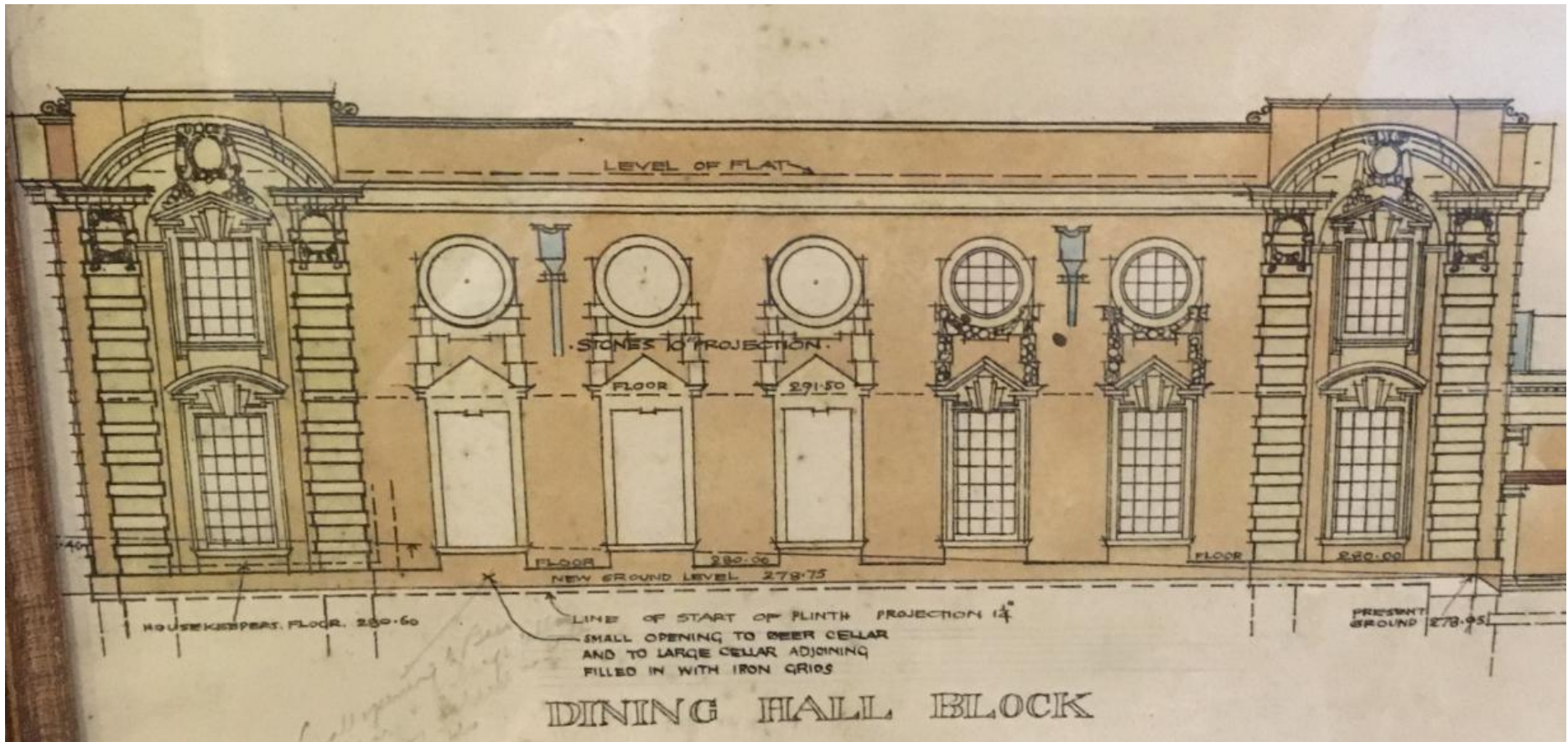


Plate 2: West Elevation of Dining Hall Block (North Block) – note east elevation is a mirror image