

Application ref: 2019/5367/P
Contact: John Diver
Tel: 020 7974 6368
Date: 18 December 2019

Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
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London
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Deloitte Real Estate
1 New Street Square
London
EC4A 3HQ

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:

**UCL 55-59 Gordon Square
London
WC1H 0NU**

Proposal:

Change of use of the basement level of Nos.55-56 Gordon Square from student accommodation to nursery and refurbishment works including internal and external alterations to the basement and external areas of Nos.55-59

Drawing Nos: (Prefix: 190775): 1150 P1, 1151 P1, 1200 P1, 1210 P1, 1410 P1, 2200 P1, 2210 P1, 2400 P1, 5200 P1, 5300 P1, 5400.

Design And Access Statement (prepared by Kendall Kingscott); Planning Statement (prepared by Deloitte Real Estate); Heritage Statement (prepared by Alan Baxter Associates); Photographic Schedule (prepared by Kendall Kingscott); Schedule of Works (prepared by Kendall Kingscott); Acoustic Report (prepared by Environmental Equipment Corporation Ltd); Emergency Plan (prepared by UCL); Tree Survey/Arboriculture Report (prepared by Sylva Consultancy); and Management Plan (prepared by UCL)

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 All new external work shall be carried out in materials that resemble, as closely as possible, in colour and texture those of the existing building, unless otherwise specified in the approved application.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the premises and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: (Prefix: 190775): 1150 P1, 1151 P1, 1200 P1, 1210 P1, 1410 P1, 2200 P1, 2210 P1, 2400 P1, 5200 P1, 5300 P1, 5400. Design And Access Statement (prepared by Kendall Kingscott); Planning Statement (prepared by Deloitte Real Estate); Heritage Statement (prepared by Alan Baxter Associates); Photographic Schedule (prepared by Kendall Kingscott); Schedule of Works (prepared by Kendall Kingscott);Acoustic Report (prepared by Environmental Equipment Corporation Ltd); Emergency Plan (prepared by UCL); Tree Survey/Arboriculture Report (prepared by Sylva Consultancy); and Management Plan (prepared by UCL)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 4 The installation of the timber playhouse structure shown on plans hereby approved shall not commence until such a time as detailed drawings of the structure in relation to the adjacent mature fig tree have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such details shall include sections, plans and elevation drawings (@1:20) of the structure and its relationship with the adjacent tree and root pit. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.

Reason: To ensure that the development will not have an adverse effect on existing trees and in order to maintain the character and amenity of the area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1, D2, A2 and A3 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Reasons for granting permission

No.55-59 Gordon Sq is a row of former terrace dwellings that was historically converted into uses associated with the nearby universities (D1). At ground and upper floors, the use remains as offices associated with the university (now UCL). The basement levels of the former terrace have been combined into two separate units, the first of which takes the majority of the area and is used as a nursery for the children of UCL staff and students. The second unit currently

contains a single student housing unit (2bed). Planning permission is sought for the change of use of this section of the basement from student housing to nursery. Permission is also sought for a number of minor internal and external alterations.

Policy H9 (Student housing) would usually seek to protect student housing or, where its loss is accepted, require any such loss to be met with an adequate re-provision of self-contained housing. This is in order to ensure there remains an adequate supply of student housing such that cost remains affordable to students of all backgrounds and so that any loss is secured as housing, the priority land use of the development plan. UCL is a very large educational institution that maintains some 6000 student flats in central London. In addition, the existing unit does not offer a high standard of amenity for occupiers, with limited natural light and outlook and issues of noise from the surrounding office and nursery uses. In this instance the loss of a single unit of student housing would therefore not be considered to materially impact the supply or cost of housing for students and is not objectionable.

Whilst H9 would usually require this loss to be replaced as self-contained housing, in this instance such a change would still mean that the unit would be of limited amenity standard. A divergence from the policy expectation is reasonable here, as the proposed change would allow for the expansion and investment into the nursery, which acts to support students and staff with young children by providing child support. This service is one which is well established and very well used, with evidence provided to show that the current waiting list contains several hundred names. In this case, the expanded nursery would be regarded as the optimal viable use of the basement of the site given its supporting nature to the surrounding educational institutions. Allowing the existing nursery to expand into this area would mean that its capacity (in terms of teachers/children as well as facilities) would be significantly improved and this is seen as a public benefit. Given the limited area in question (approximately 100sqm), the aforementioned residential site constraints as well as the appropriateness of the proposed replacement use, a contribution towards the supply of self-contained housing is not sought in this instance.

The only external alterations sought are minor in nature and relate to new external doors, gates and landscaping to the rear lightwells. Timber play equipment is also to be installed. Full details of these elements have been provided upfront and have been reviewed by Conservation officers. The design, materials and methodology set out for these alterations would remain sensitive to the character of the host building/terrace. These works would not impact upon the wider conservation area nor would they impact the setting of any other nearby listed buildings. Consideration of significance of the host building is set out in the associated listed building consent application. Overall the works are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the host terrace and Bloomsbury conservation area.

- 2 The replacement use is considered well-suited for this location. The area remains very highly accessible via public transport and sited centrally within the UCL Bloomsbury campus. No parking exists for the current nursery and none is proposed. Users will arrive by foot or cycle as per the existing situation and the

change proposed is not considered to result in any impact to local highways conditions. No residential dwellings adjoin any part of the site, meaning that noise from the activity on site would not give rise to disruption, particularly as the main entrance and external areas are at lower ground level and well enclosed. Similarly, the office uses at upper floors are not sensitive uses that might be disrupted by activity at basement level.

As part of the relandscaping to the rear, one mature fig tree would need to be pruned. Full details have been provided and reviews by the Council's Trees officers. The pruning works remain modest in scope and in line with those consent under a tree works application in 2013. These works are not objectionable. Timber play equipment would also be installed at the base of the tree. Following the provision of further confirmation that this equipment would remain freestanding, without foundations and with no part touching the trunk, Tree Officers raise no objection to this installation.

No comments were received in response to the public consultation. Confirmation has been received that Historic England do not oppose the works or wish to comment. The planning history of the site has been taken into account when coming to this decision. Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings and protected gardens, under s.66 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with the Camden Local Plan 2017 with particular regard for policies G1, A1, A3, A4, D1, D2, H9, C2, T1 and T2. The proposed development also accords with the London Plan 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

- 3 You are advised that any works of alterations or upgrading not included on the approved drawings which are required to satisfy Building Regulations or Fire Certification may require a further application for listed building consent.
- 4 This approval does not authorise the use of the public highway. Any requirement to use the public highway, such as for hoardings, temporary road closures and suspension of parking bays, will be subject to approval of relevant licence from the Council's Streetworks Authorisations & Compliance Team London Borough of Camden 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No 020 7974 4444) . Licences and authorisations need to be sought in advance of proposed works. Where development is subject to a Construction Management Plan (through a requirement in a S106 agreement), no licence or authorisation will be granted until the Construction Management Plan is approved by the Council.
- 5 You are advised that the appropriate standards for tree work are set out in BS 3998: 2010. Failure to ensure that the proposed works are carried out to these standards may result in damage to the tree(s) and may result in legal action by the Council.
- 6 All works should be conducted in accordance with the Camden Minimum

Requirements - a copy is available on the Council's website at <https://beta.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/1269042/Camden+Minimum+Requirements+%281%29.pdf/bb2cd0a2-88b1-aa6d-61f9-525ca0f71319> or contact the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444)

Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You must secure the approval of the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team prior to undertaking such activities outside these hours.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance/guidancecontent>

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DPope', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Daniel Pope
Chief Planning Officer