

**Wilkins Building – Room G10 and Whistler Room**  
Planning and Heritage Statement

May 2020

# 1 Introduction

## Introduction

1.1 On behalf of our Client, University College London ('UCL') ('the applicant'), we hereby submit to the London Borough of Camden ('LB Camden') a listed building consent application for the installation of fan coil units (FCUs) and associated pipework to enable controlled heating and cooling in Room G10 and the Whistler Room located in the Wilkins Building, WC1E 6BT ('the Site'). The description of development is:

***"Installation of fan coil units to enable controlled heating and cooling in Room G10 and the Whistler Room and pipework in Rooms G09, G10, G11 and G90 of the Wilkins Building and associated works."***

1.2 This Planning and Heritage Statement sets out the planning justification for the proposed development and provides a heritage impact assessment.

## The Applicant – University College London

1.3 UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with over 13,360 staff and 42,100 students. UCL provides excellence and leadership in teaching and research, was ranked eighth in the QS World University Rankings 2020, and is among the top 20 universities ranked by The Times (14) and The Guardian (10).

## Application Documents

1.4 This application comprises of:

- Application forms, certificates and notices (prepared by Deloitte Real Estate);
- Planning Statement (prepared by Deloitte Real Estate);
- Site Plan (prepared by Atkins);
- Location Plan (prepared by Atkins);
- Performance Specification and Pack of Drawings in the Appendix (prepared by Atkins);
- Proposed Plan showing locations of views and Photographic Schedule (prepared by Atkins);
- and,
- Detailed Drawings (prepared by Falkusjoinery).

## Structure of Planning Statement

1.5 The remainder of this planning statement sets out the site context, the background to the application, the planning policy framework, key policies and how the scheme addresses these.

1.6 This statement comprises the following chapters:

- Chapter 2: Site context;
- Chapter 3: The proposals, background to the application and pre-application consultation;
- Chapter 4: The Development Plan and policy designations;
- Chapter 5: Planning policy considerations, heritage impact assessment and benefits of the proposals;
- Chapter 6: Conclusions;
- Appendix A and B.

## 2 Site Context

### Site Location

- 2.1 The Site comprises the Wilkins Building, which is located in LB Camden and within the UCL Bloomsbury Campus. It is bounded by the Main Quad to the west, the Kathleen Lonsdale Building to the north, the London Centre of Nanotechnology to the east and the Bernard Katz Building to the south.
- 2.2 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 and Euston Square Underground Station on Gower Street.
- 2.3 The Site is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, within Sub Area 3, 'London University/British Museum.' There are a number of other designated heritage assets in close proximity to the site including Grade II-listed 23 Gower Place (list entry number: 1322168), and the Grade II listed Kathleen Lonsdale Building ('KLB') (list entry number: 1322169).

### Site Description

- 2.4 The Wilkins Building comprises a quad of buildings which are accessed via the main university entrance from Gower Street. The application Site comprises the central building of the Wilkins Quad only.
- 2.5 Room G10 and the Whistler Room are both located on the ground floor of the Site. Both rooms are adjacent to one another.
- 2.6 The Wilkins Building is a Grade I-listed building, first listed in 1954 (list entry: 1113056). The listing title is:

*"University College (University of London) and attached railings to north and south wings."*

- 2.7 The listing description is extracted below:

*"CAMDEN GOWER STREET (West side) University College (University of London) and attached railings to north and south wings 10/06/54*

*GV I College. Central block c1827-29 by W Wilkins and J.P Gandy-Deering. Flaxman Gallery and Library c1848 by T.L Donaldson. South wing, c1869-76, north wing c1870-1881, both by T. Hayter Lewis. North-west wing 1912-13 by F.M Simpson. South-west wing, c1923 by A.E Richardson. South Junction block 1950, North Junction block 1951, Physics Building 1950-52 by A.E Richardson and E.A.S Houfe. STYLE/PLAN: stone buildings in Neo-Grecian style enclosing a quadrangle, the Flaxman Gallery and library extending from the rear of the portico.*

*EXTERIOR: main facade and wings, two storeys and attic. Central block: decastyle Corinthian pedimented portico on high podium approached by Imperial steps with solid stone balustrade and piers. Behind the pediment, the enriched copper dome, with blind stone lantern, of the Flaxman Gallery. Flanking the portico, 22 bays with rusticated ground floor and pilasters rising from the first floor and carrying an entablature. Architraved sash windows with cornices. Attic with rectangular, small paned windows in groups of three. Flaxman Gallery and Library: space below the dome remodelled by Donaldson to house the plaster originals of Flaxman's sculptures.*

*Library block of three storeys in brick with a stone arcade of paired columns at ground floor level. Stone band at first floor level. Large arcaded windows with stone impost bands. Second floor stepped*

*back, a partly blind arcade only the arched heads being glazed. Enriched stone roundels in the spandrels. Stone capped parapet.*

*North and south wings: two storeys with 13 bays each of which the centre bays form projecting semi-rotundas with Corinthian columns rising from the first floor carrying entablature and parapet. One bay either side of these features also projecting. First floor with pilasters between architraved sash windows with console bracketed cornices and sill string. Ground floor rusticated with architraved sashes with cornices. Architraved entrances, in the centre of projecting semi-rotundas, with console bracketed cornices, fanlights and panelled doors. Enriched frieze at first floor level.*

*North-west and south-west wings: 11 bays each in similar style but without rotundas. End bays projecting at entrance to quadrangle with three window returns. Similar facades to Gower Street.*

*INTERIORS: all retain original features.*

*SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings and stone piers to basement areas of wings.*

*HISTORICAL NOTE: founded to provide university education without religious bias and the first college of London University. Housed in a cupboard in the College is the dressed skeleton of Jeremy Bentham, philosopher and reformer who bequeathed himself on his death in 1832. Also housed at the college, a collection of neo-Classical sculpture by Flaxman and a collection of pictures. Listing NGR: TQ2958282298."*

## Planning History

- 2.8 Appendix A sets out the recent relevant planning history of the site. It demonstrates that there have been a number of minor planning and listed building consent applications granted for a range of works, including internal and external repairs to the building. Such minor alterations reflect the need for the university to modernise and adapt the building to suit its purpose.

# 3 Background to the proposals and description of works

## Project Background

- 3.1 At present, there is no controlled heating or cooling present in Room G10 or the Whistler Room, making these spaces an uncomfortable and unpleasant environment for users, especially during the summer and winter months.
- 3.2 The proposed FCUs and associated pipework are being installed to control climate conditions in the two rooms. The joinery is being installed to encase the FCUs and to ensure the new installations are sympathetic to the building. Together, the proposals will improve the overall environment and human comfort for its users.

## Description of the Proposals

- 3.3 This application is seeking listed building consent for:

***“Installation of fan coil units to enable controlled heating and cooling in Room G10 and the Whistler Room and pipework in Rooms G09, G10, G11 and G90 of the Wilkins Building and associated works.”***

- 3.4 Please refer to the Performance Specification prepared by Atkins for full details of the proposals. In summary, the internal works include the following:
- Installation of FCUs within the Whistler Room and Room G10 and associated circuits in the form of surface mounted switched fused connection units to provide power supply to the FCUs;
  - Installation of new pipework connecting the proposed FCUs to the riser in server room G11 in the Wilkins Building; and
  - Installation of customised joinery to accommodate the FCUs within the Whistler Room and Room G10. Please see Figure 1 below for an indicative drawing and section of the proposed joinery illustrating how the FCUs will fit in the joinery.

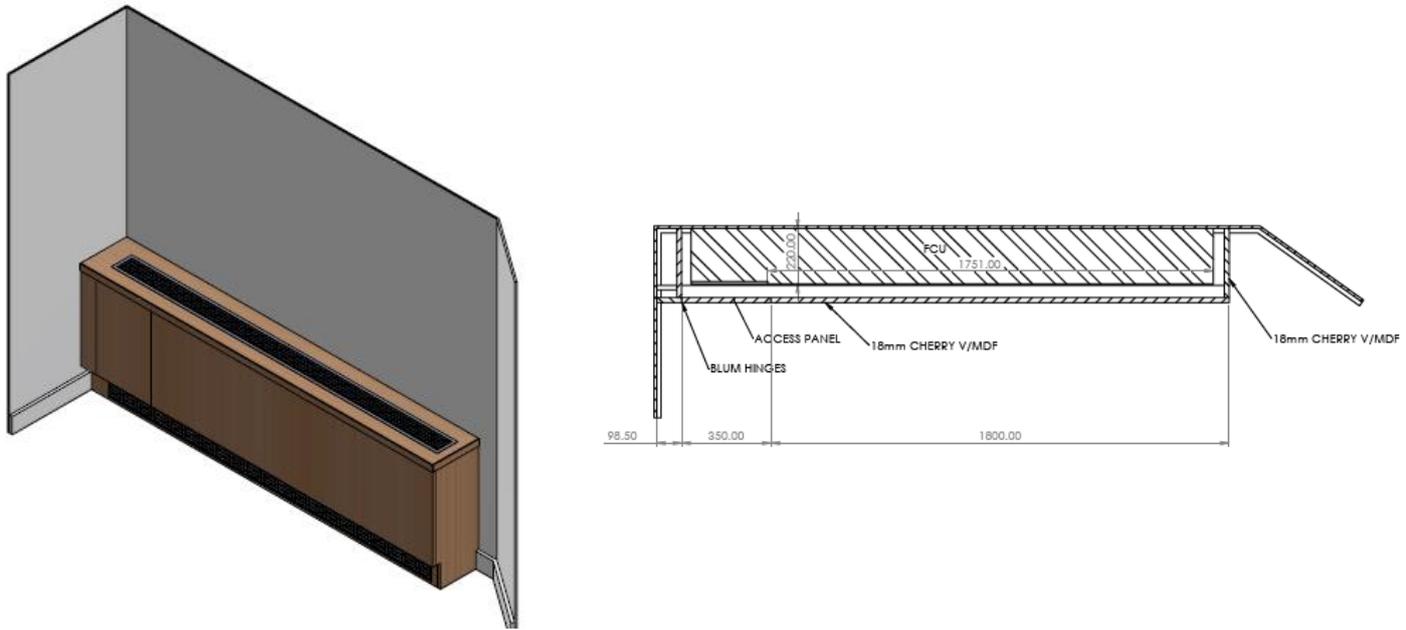


Figure 1: Drawing and section of the proposed joinery (extract from drawing ref. 3012-UCL-SD02)

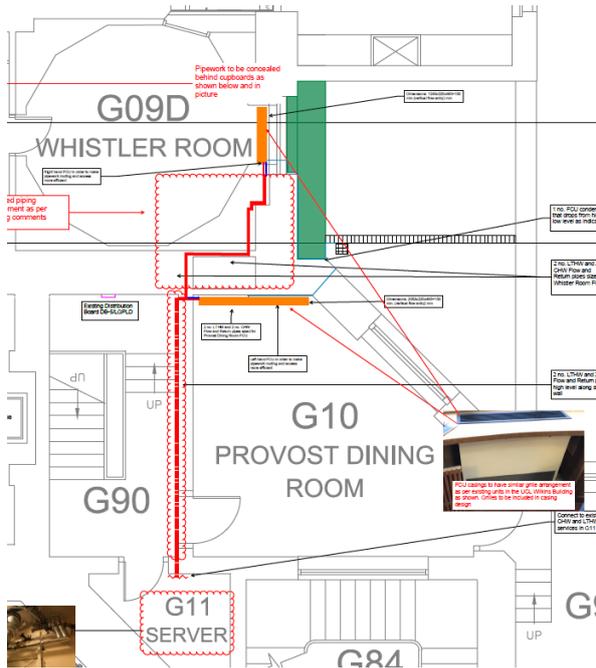


Figure 2: Location of proposed pipework (in red) and proposed FCUs (in orange) extracted from drawing ref. 5187806-ATK-00-DR-ME-100.

- 3.5 Existing services within the building have been surveyed to allow for careful consideration of routes for new pipework and location for the new FCUs. Associated pipework will connect the proposed FCUs to the existing server room (G11) and will run through four rooms within the ground floor of the Site, G09D, G10 G90 and G11.
- 3.6 Both rooms are located on the Ground Floor of the Wilkins Building and are adjacent to one another. Please see Figure 2 for location of the rooms. Photographs of the rooms are included in Appendix B.
- 3.7 Proposed pipework will be contained to the ground floor only and will be kept minimal and concealed as much as possible behind existing cupboards. Routes of the proposed pipework is detailed in the Appendix of the supporting Performance Specification, prepared by Atkins.
- 3.8 The proposed FCUs will be encased by the joinery as seen in Figure 1. New joinery for the casing will be designed to match the spaces' aesthetic design with a similar grille arrangement as the existing units in the Wilkins Building. Please refer to drawing ref. 2012-UCL-SD01 for the detailed design.
- 3.9 For a full description of the works, details of the FCUs and further technical information can be found in the supporting Performance Specification prepared by Atkins.

#### **Pre-Application Discussions**

- 3.10 This application has been subject to detailed pre-application discussions and a site visit with the Conservation Officer from LB Camden.
- 3.11 During the walk around of the site, the background and need for the proposals were explained and understood by the officer.
- 3.12 An additional meeting was held to further discuss detailed design, particularly in relation to the radiator casing and routing of the pipework. This has been agreed and is detailed within the accompanying submission pack.
- 3.13 In conclusion, the proposals have officer support.

# 4 The Development Plan

4.1 This section sets out the development plan and policy designations, which apply to the application Site.

## The Local Development Plan

4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3 The application will be assessed against LB Camden’s Development Plan. The Development Plan comprises:

- The London Plan (2016, amended 2017);
- Camden Local Plan (2017);
- Camden Site Allocations Plan (2013);
- Camden Policy Map (2019);
- Euston Area Plan (2015); and,
- Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014).

4.4 Material considerations for the site will also be considered when determining the application. These include the following documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019);
- The Draft New London Plan (2018);
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (‘BCAA’) (2011);
- Camden Planning Guidance documents: Design (2019); and,
- Camden Draft Site Allocations (2020).

## Site Allocations

4.5 The following policy designations apply to the application site:

- Central Activities Zone;
- Left wing of the Primrose Hill Background Assessment Area; and,
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area (Sub-area 3: British Museum/University of London).

4.6 The next section will set out the key planning considerations for the proposals taking into account the above policy designations and the nature of the proposals.

# 5 Planning policy and heritage impact assessment

## Introduction

5.1 This section assesses the proposals against the relevant policy on heritage and design and summarises the benefits of the proposals.

## Heritage and Design

5.2 Section 16 of the NPPF (2019) 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' sets out the key tests which the proposals will need to meet in relation to their impact on heritage assets.

5.3 Paragraphs 193 – 202 specifically set out how impacts to heritage assets as a result of proposals should be considered. The NPPF sets out that great weight should be given to the assets' conservation with the level of weight correlating to the level of significance of the asset. Any harm should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to Grade I listed buildings should be exceptional (paragraph 194).

5.4 Paragraph 196 states where a proposal is considered to lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.

5.5 Policy 7.8 'Heritage Assets and Archaeology' of the current London Plan notes that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

5.6 Draft London Plan Policy HC1 'Heritage conservation and growth' states in part C:

*"Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings, should also be actively managed. Development proposals should seek to avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process".*

5.7 The Camden Local Plan (2017) Policy D2 'Heritage' seeks to preserve, where appropriate, and enhance Camden's heritage assets and their settings.

5.8 Paragraph 3.27 focuses on the impact of proposals on the historic significance of a listed building, including its features, such as:

- Original and historic materials and architectural features;
- Original layout of the rooms;
- Structural integrity; and,
- Character and appearance.

### ***Applicant's Response and Statement of Heritage Impact***

- 5.9 The proposals are for the installation of customised FCUs to allow heating and cooling of Room G10 and the Whistler Room of the Grade I listed property, which is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 5.10 The works will be contained internally. **The proposals will have no impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings or on the character and appearance of the conservation area.** Consequently, this section of the planning and heritage statement will focus on the impact of the proposals on the historic and architectural significance of the Wilkins Building only.
- 5.11 The proposals are for the installation of FCU's, new joinery and associated pipework. The pipework will run through the four rooms in the ground floor of the Site only, and is required to accommodate these services. This will be kept to a minimum and installed in unobtrusive locations to minimise any visual impact within the building.
- 5.12 Very small amounts of original fabric will be removed to allow the penetration of pipework through internal walls. This will result in isolated incidents of very minor harm through the removal of fabric. Overall, the **impact of the new pipework on the historic and architectural significance of the building is negligible.**
- 5.13 The proposed FCUs and joinery will both require minor fixings. The FCUs will be located at the edge of both rooms and will be encased by the proposed joinery, therefore their visual impact will be kept minimal. The joinery will be designed to be in keeping with the architectural significance of the Grade I listed building. **Therefore, the impact of the FCUs and joinery on the architectural and historic significance of the building is negligible.**
- 5.14 Additionally, the proposals **will result in public benefits.** The proposals will deliver benefits through: upgrading two rooms to meet modern requirements of a higher education building (the buildings optimal use); the joinery will contribute to the architectural significance of these two spaces; and, and improved human comfort for users.
- 5.15 **The proposals are aligned with national, regional and local policy on design and heritage.**

### ***Summary and Benefits of the Proposals***

- 5.16 **Overall, the proposals will have a negligible impact on the architectural and historical significance of the listed building, and no impact on the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings or the character and appearance of the conservation area.**
- 5.17 In summary, the public benefits of the proposals include:
- The proposals will result **in upgrading two rooms to meet modern requirements. This will contribute to the ongoing use of the building for higher education use (its original and optimal use).**
  - **Allow heating and cooling systems** in Room G10 and the Whistler Room, to improve **human comfort** for users.
  - **Architecturally designed joinery to provide aesthetic interest within the rooms.**

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 To conclude, Room G10 and the Whistler Room do not have controlled heating or cooling systems in place, resulting in an unpleasant environment for users of these spaces. This will be overcome through the installation of two FCUs, joinery and accompanying pipework to serve these two rooms.

6.2 This application seeks listed building consent for:

***“Installation of fan coil units to enable controlled heating and cooling in Room G10 and the Whistler Room and pipework in Rooms G09, G10, G11 and G90 of the Wilkins Building and associated works.”***

6.3 The proposals will result in isolated incidents of very minor harm through the removal of small amounts of original fabric where new pipework will pass through internal partitions. The new mechanical equipment within the rooms will be cased within specially curated and designed joinery, which will contribute to the architectural significance of the building. On the whole, **the impact to the historic building as a result of these proposals is negligible.**

6.4 Despite the heritage impact being identified as **negligible**, the applicant has identified a **number public benefits delivered by the proposals.**

6.5 The applicant has undertaken pre-application discussions with LB Camden to ensure that the proposals are acceptable in heritage terms and **to account for the historic significance of the building at the early design stage.**

6.6 **The proposals have been fully considered against relevant planning policy at national, regional and local level**, and are considered, on balance, to **accord with policy.**

6.7 For these reasons, it is considered that **listed building consent should be granted for these proposals.**

# 7 Appendix A

Application Reference No.	Application Description	Status
<b>2018/5652/L</b>	Replacement of four doors within the North and South Cloisters.	Approved - 29 January 2019.
<b>2016/3830/L</b>	Refurbishment of 6 doors in UCL Wilkins Building.	Approved - 10 March 2017.
<b>2016/3824/L</b>	Refurbishment of an existing accessible WC, conversion of an existing office into a new male WC, remodeling of an existing female WC and lobby and removal of a cleaner's cupboard to allow for a new male WC, construction of a new stud partition to form a lobby in to the new male WC (room 221), and removal of an existing WC and cleaner's cupboard to allow for a larger female and a new male WC (Room 125 cluster).	Approved - 02 August 2016.
<b>2014/0357/P</b>	Erection of amenity terrace at ground floor, 'fourth facade' to northeast elevation and new access routes to altered refectory at lower ground floor; with associated works of demolition, alterations to service yard layout and openings in Wilkins building.	Approved - 15 January 2014.
<b>2014/0329/P</b>	Erection of single storey extension and refurbishment of lower ground floor refectory with associated alterations to openings to Wilkins building following works of demolition to existing refectory.	Approved - 15 January 2014.
<b>2014/0373/L</b>	Erection of amenity terrace at ground floor, 'fourth facade' to northeast elevation and new access routes to altered refectory at lower ground floor; with associated works of demolition, alterations to service yard layout and openings in Wilkins building.	Approved - 28 January 2014.
<b>2007/6375/L</b>	Internal refurbishment of existing rooms to be used as office space, including removal of non-original infill walls at lower ground floor level in Wilkins building; removal of non-original walls at no.26 Gordon Square, replacement carpet, lighting, radiator and redecoration.	Approved - 24 April 2008.
<b>2004/2152/L</b>	Internal works including removal of internal walls, roof and staircase, construction of new staircase and installation of disabled lift and toilet facilities and minor alterations to roof area.	Approved - 26 July 2004.

Table 1: Planning History of the Site

# Appendix B - Photographs



Figure 1: Whistler Room

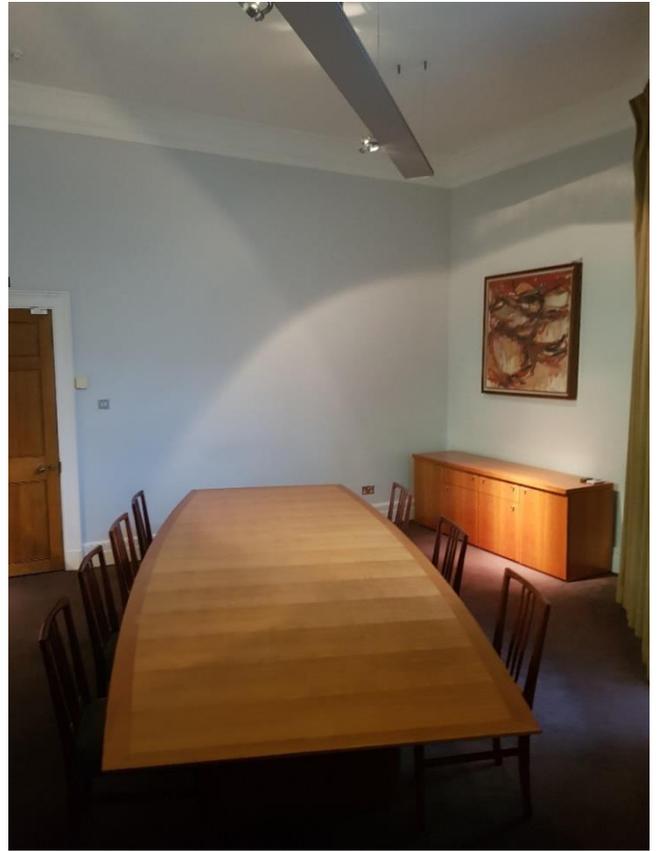


Figure 2: Room G10

# Deloitte.

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