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FAO: Laura Hazleton

8 December 2020

Our ref: LOL/NFD/AJA/U14354

Your ref: PP-09260762

Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
University College London, South Quad, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BS
Application for Full Planning Permission

On behalf of our client, University College London (the 'Applicant') we enclose an application for full planning permission at University College London, South Quad, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BS (the 'Site') for the:

“Use of the temporary teaching facility in South Quad for a further four academic years (2020-2024).”

Relevant Planning History

Planning permission (ref: 2015/4395/P) was granted on 7 September 2015 for the “Erection of 2 storey temporary building for education use (Class D1) for a period of 3 years in South Quad (adjacent to Anatomy Building and Medical Sciences Building).”

Although this permission expired on 31 December 2018, the temporary structure has remained in situ.

Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application meetings have been held with Camden planning, design and conservation officers regarding the current proposals. The principle of the planning application in light of the global pandemic has been agreed with officers.

Site and Surroundings

The application site ('the Site') is situated adjacent to the Wilkins Building in the South Quad of UCL's Bloomsbury Campus. The South Quad forms the forecourt of the Wilkins Building and is an important focal point to the Bloomsbury Campus. There are several nearby listed buildings including the Wilkins Building, the North Wing, South Wing, North West Wing and South West Wing all of which are Grade I Listed. The University Medical and Dental Student Residence on the opposite side of Gower Street and 16-25 and 26 Gordon Square to the west are Grade II listed.

The Site is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building is adjacent to South Wing and Anatomy Buildings.

The surrounding area is characterised by other educational uses with many of the buildings owned and occupied by UCL.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks planning permission for the:

“Use of the temporary teaching facility in South Quad for a further four academic years (2020-2024).”

The temporary teaching facility was erected in the South Quad in 2015. Due to the current Covid pandemic, UCL is having to implement social-distancing measures in order to safeguard the health and well-being of students and staff using the university facilities during these uncertain times. These measures are being implemented across the campus and are resulting in less intensive use of existing buildings and a resultant requirement for additional space for teaching and study. In addition, following the national revision of A-Level results in August 2020, UCL has seen an unexpected increase in the number of students enrolling in this academic year. This has further increased pressure on space across the campus. UCL is therefore seeking to use the temporary teaching facility for further four academic years between 2020-2024.

The temporary building is a two-storey structure. The Design and Access Statement accompanying this planning application provides further details.

The proposed quantum of floorspace is 310.2 sqm (GIA).

The building can be accessed via steps to the front, with a timber decking landing area outside the entrance. The access to the ground floor of the building is step-free, via a ramped access to the side of the building.

The proposed structure does not touch any of the surrounding buildings and is a standalone structure. The works are reversible and there will be no permanent impact on the conservation area or nearby listed buildings.

The proposal balances the need to be sensitive to nearby heritage aspects and for the need to deliver much needed teaching space, which is under additional pressure caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan comprises:

- i. The London Plan, being the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (2016);
and
- ii. The Camden Local Plan (2017).

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (as updated February 2019) is a material consideration.

Statutory Legislation

As the Site is located within a conservation area and in close proximity to the Wilkins Building, the North Wing, South Wing, North West Wing and South West Wing all of which are Grade I Listed, and The University Medical and Dental Student Residence, 16-25 Gordon Square and 26 Gordon Square which are Grade II listed, Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 is relevant as this statute sets out that local planning authorities should pay special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of historic or architectural interest which it possesses when considering applications.

Section 72 of the same Act states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Planning Assessment

Land Use

Local Plan Policy C3 (Cultural and leisure facilities) outlines the need for new community uses to be close to the community they serve and accessible so as many people as possible can enjoy their benefits.

Policy 3.18 of the London Plan sets out that proposals which enhance education and skills provision will be supported.

The impact of Covid-19 means that more space needs to be provided in order to incorporate social distancing measures. The proposal is located within the Bloomsbury Campus and will provide much needed space to accommodate lectures, seminars and tutorials each day during term time. In addition, it will be used by Student Union Societies during the evenings and weekends. The facility will also be used as student study space ahead of UCL's main examination period. During the summer, the space can be used to host – amongst other things – Summer Schools.

The proposal is located in an area that allows those walking, cycling and using public transport easy access to the Site, allowing the proposals to best serve the student community in line with London Plan Policy 3.18 and Local Plan Policy C3.

Design and Heritage

Local Plan Policy D1 seeks to ensure development respects local context and character, preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets, is of sustainable and durable construction and is adaptable to different activities and land uses and comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character. Local Plan Policy D2 seeks to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings.

It is recognised that the buildings on the UCL Bloomsbury Campus contribute significantly to the heritage and character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and it is important that the character of the settings of the nearby listed buildings are not harmed. The structure has a simple form to minimise visual impact on the surrounding heritage aspects.

The proposal is of a temporary nature and does not involve any permanent physical works or works to the adjacent listed buildings. Furthermore, the impacts caused by the proposals will only be for a limited period as the temporary building will be in situ for a maximum period of four years, following which the Site will return to its former state. Therefore, there will be no permanent visual impact on the historical nature of the site.

Therefore, the design meets the statutory tests and accords with local plan policy in terms of heritage and design.

Open space

Local Plan Policy A2 (Open Space) seeks to protect, enhance and improve access to Camden's parks, open spaces and other green infrastructure.

The temporary nature of the proposed development means the impact on hard landscaped open space will only be for a limited period whilst UCL responds to the COVID-19 pandemic requiring more temporary space for student services. The Site will be restored to hard open space once the temporary teaching space is removed.

Conclusion

The development will enable UCL to bring forward appropriate social distancing measures during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its students and staff. It is considered that the proposals for which planning permission is sought complies with the relevant statutory tests and planning policies within the Camden Local Plan. It is considered that there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to determine that the application is determined other than in accordance with the Development Plan. On this basis, planning permission should be granted for the application accordingly.

Supporting Documents

In support of this application, we enclose the following documents:

- Completed Application Form and certificates;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by UCL;
- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections, prepared by Burwell Architects;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Burwell Architects; and
- Statement of Justification, prepared by UCL;
- The requisite fee of **£2310** will be paid directly to Camden Council.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of registration and validation in due course. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Davies (020 7333 6371) or Andrew Jackson (020 3486 3734) of this office should you have any questions regarding the above.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald Eve LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gerald Eve LLP