

Address:	Ramsay Hall 20 Maple Street London W1T 5HB		3
Application Numbers:	2020/5268/P	Officer: Laura Hazelton	
Ward:	Bloomsbury		
Date Received:	27/11/2020		
<p>Proposal: Temporary change of use of Ground to Fifth Floor of the London, Paris, and New York Blocks of Ramsey Hall from Student Accommodation (Sui Generis) to Education (Class F1) comprising of student study space and associated works for a period of two years until 30th June 2022 (academic years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022) (Retrospective).</p>			
<p>Background Papers, Supporting Documents and Drawing Numbers:</p> <p>055-SLP, 055-E-G, 055-E-01, 055-E-02, 055-E-03, 055-E-04, 055-E-05, 055-5-G, 055-P-01, 055-P-02, 055-P-03, 055-P-04, 055-P-05, letter dated 13 November 2020, and Design and Access Statement dated 13 November 2020.</p>			
<p>Recommendation Summary: Grant conditional planning permission</p>			
Applicant:		Agent:	
University College London (UCL)		Mr Sam Neal Gerald Eve 72 Welbeck Street London W1G 0AY	

Analysis Information

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace (Gross Internal Area, GIA sqm)
Existing	Student Accommodation (Sui Generis)		7765.7
Proposed	Education (Class F1)		7765.7

Parking Details:		
	Parking Spaces (General)	Parking Spaces (Disabled)
Existing	0	0
Proposed	0	0

Officers' Report

Reason for Referral to Committee: Major development where this involves the construction, extension or conversion of floorspace for 10 or more new dwellings or more than 1000 sq. mtrs of non-residential floorspace; [clause 3(i)].

Executive Summary

- i. The application is made retrospectively for a change of use of the ground to fifth floors of the London, Paris and New York blocks of Ramsey Hall from student accommodation (sui generis) to a temporary use as study spaces for students (Class F1). The existing lawful use of the site is as student accommodation for University College London (UCL) students. The proposed temporary change of use is required to assist UCL in providing additional study spaces for students near to the main Bloomsbury campus during the current COVID pandemic and would be for a period of two academic years. The proposal would help to provide the necessary social distancing measures to protect the health and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ii. The application site is located within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and also sits within the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan Area and the Local Plan area defined as the 'Knowledge Quarter'.
- iii. The proposed site location within the Knowledge Quarter and close to the main Bloomsbury campus is considered a suitable location for the proposed education use and the loss of the existing student accommodation is considered acceptable as it is temporary and the student bedrooms would be unlikely to be in occupation because of less demand during the pandemic. As such, the temporary loss of the student accommodation is considered acceptable subject to the condition that the site reverts back to its lawful use at the end of the 2021/2022 academic year.
- iv. There are no external alterations proposed, and as such, the proposals would not impact the appearance of the building, nor the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.
- v. Given the reduced capacity of the building, there would be no harm to the amenity of nearby neighbouring residents.
- vi. As such, it is recommended that temporary conditional planning permission is granted.

1 Site

- 1.1 The application site comprises three blocks of University College London (UCL) student accommodation known as the London, Paris and New York blocks of Ramsey Hall. The proposals relate to the ground to fifth floors only. The site is located on Maple Street, with Fitzroy Street to the west, Whitfield Street to the east and Grafton Way to the north, and covers an area of approximately 0.18 hectares (1840sqm). The site is not statutory listed, although it is located in the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The site is normally occupied by UCL students for accommodation purposes (Sui Generis), although has been vacant recently due to the current COVID pandemic.
- 1.3 The site is located in a mixed use area, surrounded by commercial, office, residential and education uses, and is located within the Local Plan area defined as the Knowledge Quarter as well as the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan area.

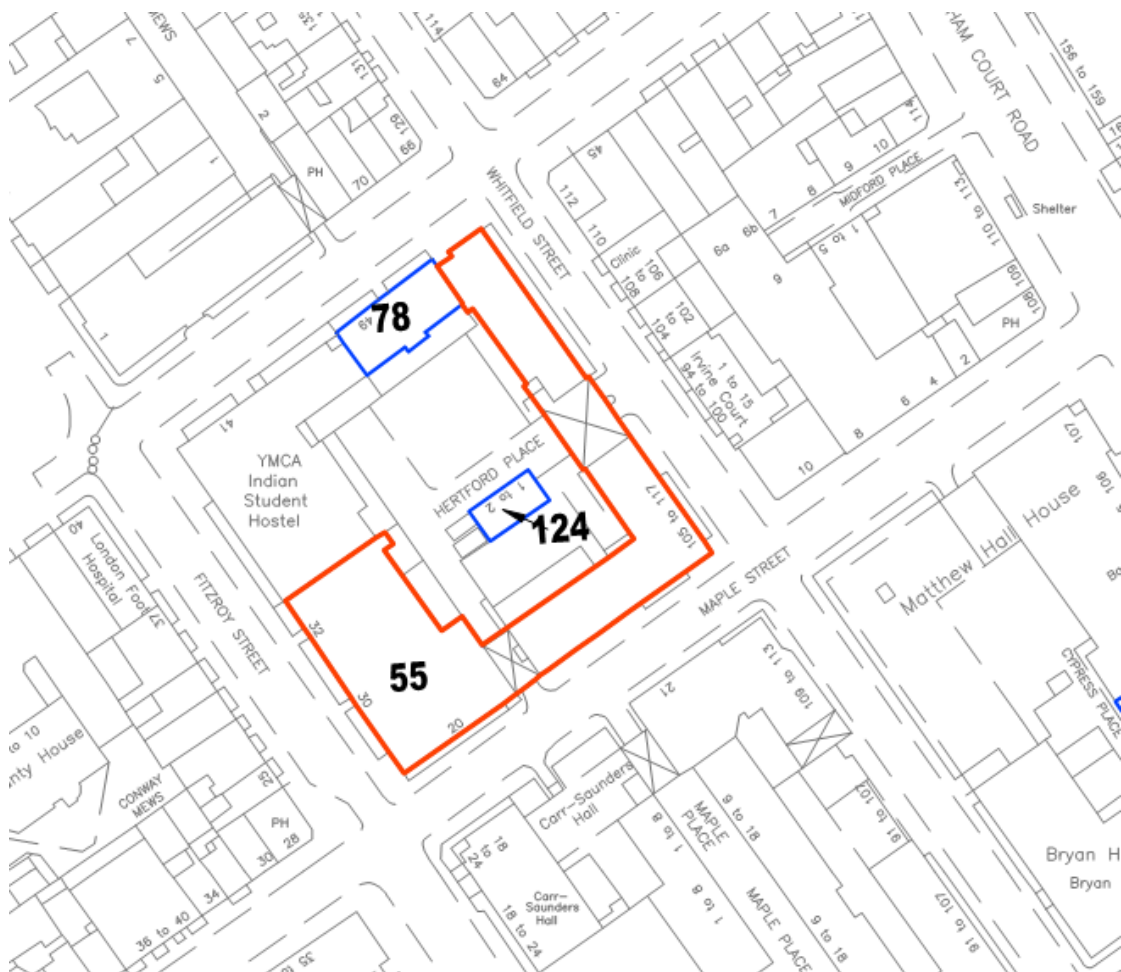


Figure 1 – Site location outlined in red. UCL-owned land shown in blue

- 1.4 The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (the best). The nearest London Underground Stations are Warren Street, Euston Square and

Goodge Street which are all a short walk away. There are also numerous bus services from Tottenham Court Road and Euston Road.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the vast majority of UCL estates staff are working from home. The pandemic has also led to many students working from home although this is not possible for all students and so there remains a high demand for study space on campus. Due to the requirements for social distancing, this has meant that larger areas of floor space are required to provide study space which in turn has led to a requirement for the use of additional buildings to facilitate this. The proposals were implemented on site in September 2020 in time for the start of the 2020/2021 academic year and therefore permission is being sought retrospectively.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the current education use of the ground to fifth floors of three blocks of Ramsey Hall be retained for a temporary period of 2 academic years until 30th June 2022 for use as a study centre for UCL students and staff. The proposals are for 412 bedrooms to be converted to individual study rooms, each containing a single desk. These bedrooms have been selected because they involve the use of shared bathrooms and as such, are not conducive to social distances and are not currently being let to students. The remaining en-suite bedrooms within Ramsey Hall will continue to be used for student accommodation as they allow for appropriate social distancing.

3 Relevant history

- 3.1 **2015/4618/P** – Roof extension to Rome block, external alterations associated with remodelling of 5th floor including alterations to elevations and plant, the creation of a rear glazed walkway extension and infill at ground level, relocation of main entrance, elevational alterations and associated refurbishment works for student accommodation (Sui Generis). Granted 31/12/2015.

4 Consultation Summary

Adjoining Occupiers

- 4.1 Site notices were displayed on 15th January 2021 on Maple Street and Whitfield Street, and a press advert was placed in the Camden New Journal on 21/01/2021.
- 4.2 No responses were received.

5 Policies & Guidance

- 5.1 **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**
- 5.2 **NPPG**
- 5.3 **London Plan 2021**

5.4 Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.5 Camden Local Plan (2017)

- G1 Delivery and location of growth
- H9 Student housing
- C5 Safety and security
- C6 Access for all
- A1 Managing the impact of development
- D1 Design
- D2 Heritage
- T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and car-free development
- T2 Parking and car-free development
- DM1 Delivery and monitoring

5.6 Fitzrovia Area Action Plan 2014

- Policy F1: Planning decisions in Fitzrovia
- Principle 6: Educational, medical and research institutions
- Principle 7: Student housing
- Principle 9: Residential amenity

5.7 Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Access for All CPG 2019
- Amenity CPG 2021
- Design CPG 2021
- Transport CPG 2021

6 Assessment

The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are considered in the following sections of this report:

7	Land use principles
8	Design
9	Impact on neighbouring amenity
10	Transport
11	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
12	Conclusion
13	Recommendations
14	Legal comments
15	Conditions
16	Informatives

7 Land use principles

- 7.1 UCL currently provides student study spaces in a variety of locations across Bloomsbury, including within the Student Centre at 27-28 Gordon Square. These spaces provide students with the flexibility of undertaking their independent studying on, or near to, the UCL campus. Due to the requirement of imposing social distancing measures across campus, buildings such as the Student Centre must be occupied at much reduced levels. This has led to the requirement for an increase in floorspace to accommodate study spaces for the students. UCL has undertaken a review of its existing portfolio to determine where it may be possible to accommodate the study spaces for a temporary period and Ramsey Hall has been identified as a suitable location.
- 7.2 Temporary permission is sought for the change of use of the ground to fifth floors of Ramsey Hall from student accommodation (Sui Generis) to use class F1 (Learning and Non-Residential Institutions) for a period of two academic years, until 30th June 2022. This is to enable UCL to provide student study spaces through the installation of socially distanced study desks in existing non self-contained bedrooms. Retrospective consent is sought as the proposals were implemented on site in September 2020 in time for the start of the 2020/2021 academic year.
- 7.3 Policy H9 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will seek to resist the net loss of student accommodation unless it can be demonstrated that the existing accommodation is incapable of meeting contemporary standards or expectations for student housing; or adequate replacement accommodation will be provided; or it can be demonstrated that the accommodation is no longer needed because the needs of students at the institutions that it serves can be better met in existing accommodation elsewhere. Principle 7 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan seeks to guide development of new student housing in Fitzrovia to existing student housing sites, but does not discuss proposals involving the loss of student housing.
- 7.4 In this instance, the application is for a temporary change of use for two academic years to assist with providing suitable socially distanced study spaces for the students during the current COVID pandemic. Although the application will lead to a loss of student accommodation, this will only be for a temporary period to assist with implementing COVID procedures and it will then revert back to its lawful use. Furthermore, these bedrooms are currently not occupied as they involve the use of shared bathrooms which are not conducive to social distancing. Existing ensuite bedrooms will be retained in their existing student accommodation use.
- 7.5 Subject to a condition requiring the site to revert back to the lawful student accommodation use on or before 30th June 2022, there would be no long term loss of the student housing and the proposals would not be in conflict with Policy H9 or the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan.
- 7.6 The proposed temporary use is for educational purposes. Policy C2 sets out how the Council will ensure that there is provision of community facilities to meet the

needs of a growing population. 'Community facilities' includes childcare, education, adult learning and training, healthcare, police stations, libraries, public houses, etc., which form a vital part of local neighbourhoods.

- 7.7 Principle 6 of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (FAAP) states that large scale institutional uses should be located and designed to contribute to meeting the Plan's objectives and comply with relevant development plan policies. In particular they should maintain the mixed-use character of the area, support the residential community and its facilities and protect and enhance the residential amenity and quality of life. It goes on to state that the Council will guide development of large scale education and research uses to the area east of Tottenham Court Road and to the Howland Street Character Area.
- 7.8 Although the application site is located two blocks west of Tottenham Court Road, and as such, would not meet the aim of the FAAP to guide education uses to the area east of Tottenham Court Road, the proposals would involve the change of use of an existing UCL student accommodation building to provide study spaces for UCL students. Furthermore, the change of use would be for a temporary period of two academic years only. The development would not result in a new or expanded institution, and would comply with the overall intentions of Principle 6 in maintaining the mixed-use character of the area and protecting residential amenity.
- 7.9 Due to the current COVID pandemic, there is a requirement for social distancing measures to be imposed to maintain the health and wellbeing of staff and students at the university. As such, there is a requirement for student study spaces to be suitably distanced which requires an increase in floor area to accommodate the study spaces. The site is located in the Knowledge Quarter within an existing student accommodation building, and the proposals would assist the university in meeting the needs of its students during the pandemic. As such, the proposed site is considered a suitable location for the proposed temporary educational use, in accordance with the Local Plan policies and the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan.

8 Design

- 8.1 Policy D1 seeks to secure high quality design in all development by requiring development to respond to local character and context, be highly sustainable in design and construction, integrate well to the surrounding streets and townscape, comprise high quality architecture, and be accessible for all. Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. Camden's Local Plan is supported by CPG (Design).
- 8.2 The proposal is for the temporary change of use to an existing building and does not involve any external alterations which would affect the appearance of the building or the setting of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.

9 Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 9.1 Camden Local Plan policy A1 and the Amenity CPG are relevant with regards to the impact on the amenity of residential properties in the area.
- 9.2 The nearest residential dwellings are located at Montagu House to the south of the site and Irvine Court to the east.
- 9.3 Although student uses can sometimes have the potential to raise amenity issues in residential areas if not managed appropriately, the proposed temporary use to provide student study spaces would be similar in nature and likely less intensively used than the existing student accommodation use. The proposal would provide a single study space in each converted bedroom, so the number of students in the building would be no greater than the existing arrangement. In order to ensure that this situation does not change before the end of the temporary period with the lifting of restrictions, a condition is recommended limiting the occupancy of the building to not greater than 412 desk spaces. Opening hours would be Monday to Friday only, from 09:00 to 21:00. As such, it is not considered that there would be any harm to neighbouring amenity by way of loss of privacy or disturbance. Given the lawful use as student accommodation which would see students entering and leaving the building at any hour with no restriction, and the fact that student numbers within the building would not be increased, it is not considered necessary to secure these hours by condition as there would be no material impact on neighbouring amenity.

10 Transport

Car Parking

- 10.1 Policy T2 of the Local Plan states that the Council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car-free. The existing building does not include any car parking spaces, and none are proposed. All visitors to the building would need to travel to the site via sustainable modes of transport.

Cycle Parking

- 10.2 Policy T1 of the adopted Local Plan states that we expect cycle parking at developments to be provided in accordance with the standards set out in the London Plan. The standard for student accommodation is 0.75 spaces per bedroom for long stay plus 1 space per 40 bedrooms for short stay. This would give a requirement for at least 309 long stay spaces and 10 short stay spaces (319 spaces in total). Whilst the current proposal is for a temporary change of use to non-overnight accommodation, the student numbers will remain broadly the same. The use of other cycle parking standards, such as for teaching or office space, are not considered appropriate given that the space involved here is very modular and not open plan.
- 10.3 The applicant has confirmed that there are 60 existing cycle parking spaces within the site. Although consideration was given to whether additional cycle parking could be provided at the site, it was not considered possible due to

current COVID restrictions in terms of the associated use of shower/changing facilities that would be associated with the spaces.

- 10.4 Given the proposals would provide one study space per existing single bedroom, the numbers of students would not be increasing at the site, and the fact that the proposals are for a temporary change of use, the existing provision of cycle parking is therefore considered acceptable in this instance.

Access

- 10.5 There are no proposed changes to the methods of access. Existing access arrangements would be retained via the access control door along Whitfield Street which leads into the internal courtyard. Steps and DDA compliant ramps located within the internal courtyard provide access to the study rooms. Each block can be accessed across all floors via stairways and lifts.

Refuse and recycling

- 10.6 Servicing and waste storage will remain the same as existing. Given the capacity of the building will be the same as existing, this is considered acceptable.

11 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 11.1 The proposal would not be liable for the Mayor of London's CIL2 (MCIL2) or Camden's CIL as there is no uplift in floorspace.

12 Conclusion

- 12.1 The proposed temporary change of use is required to assist UCL in providing appropriate study spaces for students near to the main Bloomsbury campus during the current COVID pandemic. The proposal would help to provide the necessary social distancing measures to protect the health and wellbeing of staff and students.
- 12.2 The proposed site location within the Knowledge Quarter is considered a suitable location for the temporary education use and the loss of the existing student accommodation is considered acceptable as it is temporary and the student bedrooms would be unlikely to be in occupation during the pandemic. The development would also be in accordance with the intentions of the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan to maintain the existing mixed use character of the area and not harm residential amenity.
- 12.3 There are no external alterations proposed, and as such, the proposals would not impact the appearance of the building, nor the character and appearance of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.
- 12.4 Given the reduced capacity of the building, there would be no harm to the amenity of nearby neighbouring residents.

- 12.5 As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable subject to the recommended conditions, including the condition requiring the site to revert back to its lawful student accommodation use on or before 30th June 2022, and would be in accordance with the Camden Local Plan 2017 and London Plan 2021.

13 Recommendation

- 13.1 Planning Permission is recommended subject to conditions.

14 Legal Comments

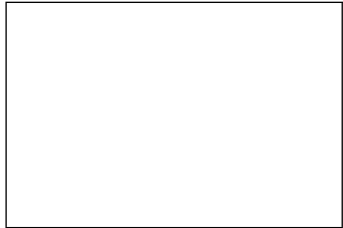
- 14.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

15 Planning Conditions

1	<p>Approved drawings</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 055-SLP, 055-E-G, 055-E-01, 055-E-02, 055-E-03, 055-E-04, 055-E-05, 055-5-G, 055-P-01, 055-P-02, 055-P-03, 055-P-04, 055-P-05, letter dated 13 November 2020, and Design and Access Statement dated 13 November 2020.</p> <p>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.</p>
2	<p>Temporary consent</p> <p>The use hereby permitted is for a temporary period only and shall cease on or before 30th June 2022, at which time the premises shall revert to their former lawful use which is student accommodation (Sui Generis).</p> <p>Reason: In order to protect the existing student accommodation use and so that the long term use of the site may be properly considered in accordance with policies DM1 and H9 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.</p>
3	<p>Restriction of the number of desk spaces</p> <p>Occupancy of the building for the use hereby approved shall not be greater than 412 desk spaces.</p> <p>Reason: In order to prevent disturbance and protect the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with policy A1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.</p>

16 Planning Informatives

1	<p>Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).</p>
2	<p>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)</p> <p>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.</p>
3	<p>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.</p>



**Ramsay Hall
20 Maple Street
London
W1T 5HB**

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