
From: Bloomsbury Conservation Areas <planning@bloomsburyconservation.org.uk>
Sent: 10 June 2021 11:01
To: Planning Planning
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 2021/2019/P_21-24 Russell Square

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Beware – This email originated outside Camden Council and may be malicious. Please take extra care with any links, attachments, requests to take action or for you to verify your password etc. Please note there have been reports of emails purporting to be about Covid 19 being used as cover for scams so extra vigilance is required.

Bloomsbury CAAC objects to the proposal, as submitted, to create a new school hall to the rear of numbers 21-24 Russell Square.

We are informed within the Design & Access statement that “the siting has been chosen not to increase the built area overall on the site, and to maintain established positions and building lines.”

The plans in detail however tell a different story.

The print workshop to be demolished is not a square block of the scale that is currently envisaged. The angular cube that will replace it is of much greater height and bulk. The sharp corners seem to announce the arrival of an “institution”, which conflicts with the elegance of residential architecture of the host building. The proposed timber cladding also seems inappropriate in context. How well with this wear in relation to the age of the existing Georgian terraced housing facing Russell Square?

The replacement structure will be most obviously visible when viewed by those walking from Woburn Square along Thornhaugh Street in the direction of Russell Square. This is a popular thoroughfare.

The existing workshop has a glass roof, which considerably reduces the extension’s current impact on the host building. The use of render on the blind walls of the other extensions is compatible with a terrace of this era. Neither structure is higher than the historic mews wing that flanks Thornhaugh Street.

The imposition of a much larger structure will also reduce the visibility of window openings on the host building’s rear façade and fundamentally alter the visual perception of the heritage asset from this angle.

Although there have been changes to the rear of Russell Square during previous eras, the historic terrace has always been the most prominent structure.

We do not agree that the proposed new building will read as subservient both to the main houses and to the number 24 mews element. Historic England guidance specifically states that extensions that dominate/compete in terms of scale are likely to cause harm.

To state that the terrace is “dwarfed” by the IoE building to the north and east of the site is not accurate in terms of the experience of someone walking along Thornhaugh Street, due to the actual physical distance of the IoE tower.

The immediate context requires a much less bulky and provocative structure, that will ensure the Grade II terrace, originally built as residential housing facing Russell Square, retains its character and significance within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Kind Regards

Debbie Radcliffe

for BCAAC

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