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**From:** Bloomsbury Conservation <planning@bloomsburyconservation.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 09 August 2021 21:14  
**To:** Joshua Ogunleye; Planning Planning  
**Subject:** OBJECTION: 2021/2024/P

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Dear Joshua,

The Bloomsbury CAAC objects to the application 2021/2024/P at 92 Southampton Row for alterations to a building within a shared lightwell space.

Bloomsbury, while commonly perceived as being characterised by formally planned Georgian terraces and Victorian mansion blocks, has a number of interesting hidden spaces representing the piecemeal and informal nature of historic development from the Georgian period onwards. Shared lightwell spaces such as these, while less famous than grand buildings such as the British Museum, represent valuable insights into the less formalised and 'outward facing' aspects of historic architecture.

The block enclosed by Southampton Row to the west and Old Gloucester Street to the east contains a number of interesting features and rear elevations, along with historic features and materials such as glazed white tiles designed to increase light to properties facing onto darker spaces. It is the accumulation of a number of interesting features such as these which gives such spaces their special interest as 'hidden', 'informal', but 'shared' spaces.

In our view the hotel's existing long and historic or historically-detailed rooflights contributes towards this special interest, and their removal and replacement with a modern and plain roof surface with modern skylights causes some level of harm to the significance of the conservation area. Just as the fenestration of rear elevations contributes towards the significance of a conservation area despite usually being hidden, the design and appearance of roof surfaces and rooflights, especially in a shared space, contributes towards the significance of a conservation area. The demolition of a rear facade of historic or architectural interest would not be permitted simply because it is not visible from the public realm, therefore the demolition of a roof of historic interest should similarly be resisted. A proliferation of such destructive changes in these shared lightwells would lead to a fundamental erosion of the historic interest of these spaces.

There is no information contained within the applicant's Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement to explain the historic significance of the building concerned despite falling within a conservation area. Relevant demolition in a conservation area should clearly explain the significance of the parts of the building being demolished.

The Bloomsbury CAAC therefore objects to this application.

Owen Ward

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