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FAO: Laura Hazleton

17 December 2021

Our ref: LOL/NFD/SNE/AJA/U14354

Your ref: PP-10422390

Dear Madam

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
University College London, Main 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, Main Quad, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BS (the 'Site') for the:

"Use of the temporary teaching facility in Main Quad for a further three academic years (2022-2025)."

Relevant Planning History

Planning permission (ref: 2017/2934/P) was granted on 19 July 2017 for the "Installation of a two-storey temporary (5 years) building for use as teaching space within the Main Quad of the Wilkin's Building at UCL's Bloomsbury Campus."

This permission is due to expire on 19 July 2022, and this application seeks to extend the temporary use of the teaching space.

Site and Surroundings

The application site ('the Site') is situated adjacent to the Chadwick wing of the Wilkins Building in the Main Quad of UCL's Bloomsbury Campus. The Main 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, Northwest Wing and South West Wing all of which are Grade I Listed. The Two Observatories in the University College Quadrangle are Grade II listed, of which the southmost observatory is located adjacent to the temporary teaching facility.

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

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

The following Site designations are relevant to the application:

- Central London Area;
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area;
- Central Activities Zone (London Plan); and
- Open Space.

Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application meetings have been held with Camden planning, design and conservation officers regarding the current proposals. The principle of this planning application in light of the current student bulge within the science and engineering departments has been agreed with officers.

University College London

UCL was founded in 1826 in the heart of London. UCL is London's leading multidisciplinary university, with more than 13,000 staff and 42,000 students from 150 different countries.

UCL occupies a number of sites across London providing educational and administrative services, with its main campus situated in the heart of Bloomsbury.

Following the national revision of A-Level results in August 2020 and 2021, a number of universities have seen an unexpected increase in the number of students joining this year and in the previous academic year. UCL is one of the university's that has seen a notable increase in the number of students joining this academic year. This has created an additional pressure on UCL to accommodate students across the campus.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks planning permission for the:

“Use of the temporary teaching facility in Main Quad for a further three academic years (2022-2025).”

The temporary teaching facility was erected in the Main Quad in 2017. Following the national revision of A-Level results in August 2020, UCL has seen an unexpected increase in the number of students enrolling at the University. The extension of the temporary change of use will allow UCL to provide appropriate laboratory facilities for the STEM faculties. UCL is therefore seeking to use the temporary teaching facility for further three academic years between 2022-2025.

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 328 sqm (GIA).

The building can be accessed via a raised external entrance to the front, which will provide the primary entrance to the building. The access to the ground floor of the building is step-free, via a ramped access to the building.

Any plant proposed will be hidden within the existing temporary building. An acoustic report has been submitted in support of the application which explains the acceptability of noise limits on site.

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. Furthermore, the proposal does not harm the trees surrounding the temporary facility.

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 (2021); and
- ii. The Camden Local Plan (2017).

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2021) 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 two observatories in the quadrangle 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 the student bulge mean means that more teaching space needs to be provided in order to incorporate the increased student numbers. The proposal is located within the Bloomsbury Campus and will provide much needed teaching space to accommodate the wet labs for a temporary period.

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 three 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 the open space will only be for a limited period whilst UCL responds to the student bulge which has meant the university requires more temporary space. The Site will be restored to open space once the temporary teaching space is removed.

Conclusion

The development will enable UCL to manage the student bulge which has occurred following the national revision of A-Level results in 2020 and 2021. 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:

- A copy of this letter;
- Completed Application Form and Certificates;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by UCL;
- Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections, prepared by Twelve Architects;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Twelve Architects;
- Acoustic Report, prepared by BDP;
- Arboricultural Development Report, prepared by Fabrik; and
- Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan, prepared by Fabrik.

The requisite fee of **£2338** 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,



Gerald Eve LLP