Comments on 2012/5667/L 39-47 Gordon Square

Comments from Bloomsbury CAAC

We looked at this application very briefly at our meeting on 20 December 2020 and apologise for the lateness of these comments.

Members of the committee were given a guided visit of this site by Birkbeck staff some time ago (summer 2020?).

At the time we were reassured by Birkebeck's intentions: the restoration of the front parts of the houses, with changes mainly kept to the rear part, where all nine houses have previously been altered to some extent, the middle section in particular extended at ground and basement level over the rear gardens.

We have not had time to look at this application in the depth it deserves – we note that on Camden list of documents submitted, the second part, out of four, of the Design and Access statement appears t be missing.

Would it be possible to let us know when this becomes available?

At this point, we would like to register our grave concerns about the proposals for the main entrance, at no. 43 Gordon Square, where the large scale metal cut-outs, with owl symbol, proposed for the front railings, are completely unacceptable.

The front railings should be left completely without additions – the proposed signs would form a very unfortunate precedent.

Birkbeck should follow the much more modest signage used by UCL in the square.

Similarly, completely covering one whole rusticated section of the wall next to the front door with a coloured sign is unacceptable.

The proposed smaller cutouts projecting from the house itself are less obtrusive, but again there is no reason for there to be two. If a projecting sign were to be acceptable it should be situated on the left of the door, mid-way between the door and limit of the rustication.

Traditionally signage was often situated within the fanlight, for example letters which are slightly 3-D and stuck to the glass (there are surviving examples of this, we think, in Gower Street).

The handling of the disabled access, always difficult, in this case is discreet and is not objectionable per se.

Hero Granger-Taylor, committee member, [redacted] 19.1.21