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Our ref: LOL/NFD/SNE/U0015514

Your ref: PP-10566780

07 February 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

University College London, Rockefeller Building, University Street, London, WC1E 6DE
Application for Full Planning Permission

We have been instructed on behalf of our client, University College London, to submit an application for planning permission in respect of external works at the Rockefeller Building, University Street, London ("the Site").

Planning permission is sought for;

"Proposed external works relating to Rockefeller Building including the removal of redundant services and construction of new lightwell and lifting beam, installation of new louvre openings, and associated works."

Site and Surroundings

The Rockefeller Building's main entrance is located on University Street. To the east of the site is Gower Street and to the south is Chenies Mews. The site is currently used for educational purposes by University College London (UCL). The building is Grade II listed and falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The surrounding area consists of other University and medical buildings such as the Cruciform Building to the North of the Site, and UCL's Main Quadrangle Building and campus to the east.

The area in which works are proposed falls to the rear of the Rockefeller Building within a goods yard which is located behind a set of security gates at the north of Chenies Mews.

The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of (PTAL) of 6b (excellent).

Relevant Planning History

From a review of the Council's online planning register, we have provided a summary of the relevant planning applications relating to the Site.

In December 2021, planning permission (2021/4710/P) and listed building consent (2021/5433/L) were granted for "Erection of a plant enclosure on the roof facing Huntley Street."

In April 2020, planning permission (2020/0695/P) and listed building consent (2020/0823/L) were granted for “Erection of a plant enclosure on the roof and a solid acoustic screening and associated works at the edge of the roof.”

In 2018, planning permission (2018/4242/P) and listed building consent (2018/4243/L) were granted for “Re-configuration of internal spaces, replacement and upgrade of services within risers and concealed ceilings with associated works to corridor spaces; additional plant at roof level and within the rear courtyard on multi-storey deck; replacement of existing metal fire escape stairwell to the rear lightwell.”

In 2014, listed building consent (2014/3337/L) was granted for “Minor internal alterations to 2nd and 3rd floor room numbers: 222-224, 226-227, 302, 304, 313, 320, 323, replacement of window with access door at 2nd floor level and associated building services plant on roof of second, fifth and sixth floor.”

Background and Proposals

As part of UCL’s review of its energy demand, it has been determined there is a requirement for a new UCL substation, associated switch rooms, and a new UKPN substation to meet future demand. It is proposed that this infrastructure will be located within the basement level of the Rockefeller Building Oil Tank Room.

To assist with the delivery of these substations, UCL require a new lightwell to be constructed within the Goods Yard adjacent to the Oil Tank Room. This will allow for the delivery of the equipment, and easy access for future maintenance requirements. In addition, a new electrical cable is required to link the new substations and switch gear in the oil tank room to the existing electrical panels beneath the Paul O’Gorman cafe. This will entail a cable running through the Rockefeller Building Fire Escape Alley which will be below ground, and any excavations will be made good to match existing. Further details on the proposed works are provided in the support Design and Access Statement, prepared by Burwell Architects.

With regards to the proposed substations, the UCL substation will be an ancillary feature to the existing educational use within the building and therefore would not require planning permission for a material change of use. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed UKPN substation would fall under Class B, Part 15 of the GPDO 2015 (as amended) and will therefore not require a formal change of use. However, we note that planning permission would be required for any external alterations made to the building to accommodate the substations.

As the building is listed, consideration has been given to whether listed building consent is required for the proposed internal and external works. Following discussions with Camden’s Conservation Officers, it has been confirmed that listed building consent would not be required in this instance and therefore only planning permission has been sought.

In summary, planning permission is sought for the proposed external works to the building which, inter alia, include:

- Construction of lightwell within the goods yard roadway;
- Construction of lifting beam;
- 2no. opening for ventilation louvres; and
- Installation of external cable routing.

Local Development Framework

The London Borough of Camden's Local Development Framework comprises The London Plan (2021), and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

Camden also have a number of adopted Planning Guidance documents which would be a material consideration.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) is also a material consideration.

Planning Assessment

Design

Local Plan Policy D1 seeks to secure high quality design. Development will be required to respect local context and character and preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets. The Council expects excellence in architecture and design. Local Plan Policy D2 seeks to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings.

During design review for the proposed works, consideration has been given to the Site's location within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, its designation as a listed building, and its close proximity to nearby listed buildings.

The proposed external works are all to be located within the existing goods yard and fire escape alleyway to the rear of the Rockefeller Building. These areas currently comprise a mix of existing plant and servicing runs and are located behind a closed access gate. As such, they are not visible from external viewpoints along Chenies Mews.

Due to the nature of the existing installations in these locations, it is considered that the proposed works will be read in parallel with the existing equipment and would therefore be in keeping with the existing building design in this location and not impact the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Discussions have been held with a Camden Conservation Officer with regards to the proposed external works. They have agreed that the removal of existing redundant services in this location would be welcomed and that the works would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed building.

Therefore, the proposed external works are of a design which are in keeping with the existing building, maintaining the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and not having an adverse impact on the listed building, or surrounding listed buildings. Thus, the proposals are considered to comply with Local Plan Policies D1 and D2.

Community Facilities

Through Local Plan Policy C2, Camden seeks to ensure that community facilities and services are developed and modernised to meet the changing needs of our community and reflect new approaches to the delivery of services. Part E states that the Council will support the investment plans of educational, health, scientific and research bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate for Camden, London and the UK. In assessing proposals, the Council will also balance the impact that proposals may have on residential amenity and transport infrastructure.

The sole aim of these proposals is to improve the educational facilities provided by UCL through the introduction of new substations to assist in meeting the required energy demands of the University. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy C2.

Noise and Vibration

Policy A4 from Camden's Local Plan seeks to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed, so it does not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses.

As explained above, the proposed substation uses fall within the existing use of the building, or within permitted development rights, and therefore planning permission is not required for the uses.

The proposed substations will be located in the basement level of the Rockefeller Building which is in educational use. In addition, the immediate surrounding uses comprise of educational uses for UCL. As such, any noise/vibrations generated would not have an adverse impact on any neighbouring uses. and would comply with Policy A4.

Summary

The proposal for external works to the rear of the Rockefeller building will assist in the installation and maintenance of the proposed new substations within the basement level of the building. The design of the proposed external works are considered to be non-intrusive to the surroundings and blend-in with the existing building. They will assist in UCL to continue providing fit-for-purposed education facilities across the campus.

All elements have been assessed against policy and are all deemed compliant. 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.

Application Documents

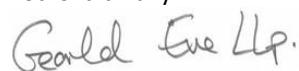
As part of the submission of the application on the Planning Portal, we enclose the following documents:

- Cover Letter, prepared by Gerald Eve;
- Application Form, prepared by Gerald Eve;
- Existing Drawings and Elevations, prepared by Burwell Architects;
- Proposed Drawings and Elevations, prepared by Burwell Architects; and
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by Burwell Architects.

The application fee of £490 has been paid concurrent to the submission of this application.

In the meantime, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Neal (020 3486 3312) or Sophie Thomson (020 7333 6297) of this office.

Yours faithfully



Gerald Eve LLP