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Planning – Development Control
Camden Council
Camden Town Hall
London
WC1H 8ND

Our ref: LOL/SNE/PIR/U0018936

Your ref: PP- 11054039

16th March 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
31 Leigh Street, Bloomsbury, London, WC1H 9EP

On behalf of our client, University College London, we write to submit an application for planning permission for external alterations at 31 Leigh Street, London, WC1H 9EP (hereafter known as the 'Site').

Full planning permission is sought for the following:

“Installation of louvres to ground floor façade above existing window bays, and associated works.”

Background

The subject site comprises a six-storey building located at the corner of Leigh Street and Cartwright Gardens. The site is located within Bloomsbury Conservation Area but is not a listed building.

The ground floor, to which this application relates, is used as flexible space by University College London and the upper floors are in use as student accommodation (Sui Generis).

In terms of surrounding uses, 4-8 Leigh Street consists of a row of four storey Grade II Listed buildings located adjacent the Site, and comprising Class E uses as ground floor level with residential above. Adjacent the site on Cartwright Gardens is an open space accommodating, in part, the Statue of John Cartwright which is Grade II Listed. 46-63 Cartwright Gardens which sit beyond the open space are also Grade II Listed, a number of which are in Class C1 (Hotel) use.

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

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.

On 15 April 2013, a planning application (ref. 2013/1598/P) was approved 'Redevelopment, following the demolition of Canterbury Hall, Commonwealth Hall and part of Hughes Parry Hall, involving the retention and refurbishment of Hughes Parry Hall tower and the erection of a 5-9 storey (plus basement level) building comprising new student accommodation (Sui Generis), leading to a net increase of 187 bedrooms (from 1,013 to 1,200 rooms); associated ancillary uses (including flexible space for the University of London, communal and

catering areas); landscaping including two internal courtyards; together with alterations to vehicle accesses, public highway and alterations to Cartwright Gardens, including modification of access to and landscaping within the Gardens.’

The development was approved subject to a s106 Legal Agreement and has now been constructed.

Development proposals

UCL has a need to modernise the existing M&E package within the Ground Floor of the building in order to improve ventilation to the ground floor space within the Site which they occupy. Whilst the new equipment is to be installed internally, it does necessitate some external alterations in the form of louvres at ground floor level. The louvres will act as air intake and extract points for the ventilation system being installed within the building.

The louvres are to be installed within the top panels of four of the ground floor windows fronting Leigh Gardens and one window fronting Cartwright Gardens. In order to limit their visual impact, the proposed louvres are to match in colour, the frames of the existing ground floor windows.

It should be highlighted that the requirement for the works has arisen in response to UCL’s post-Covid strategy. The site is currently unventilated, and the works would ensure adequate ventilation which would serve to improve the internal environment for users of the space.

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 has 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

Policy D1 (Design) requires that development respects local context and character and comprises details and materials that are of a high quality and complement local character. Furthermore, as the site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, any development is expected to comply with the overarching principle of Policy D2 (Heritage) which requires that development within designated areas preserves, or where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area.

The louvres have been designed in order to minimise the visual impact on the elevations and will be read in line with the remaining blank panels above the other window bays. This has partly been achieved by restricting the depth of the louvres to be consistent with the top of the existing window heads, which ensures that the proportions of the existing building are not disrupted by their installation.

The supporting text to Policy D1 states that schemes should incorporate materials of a high quality. It goes on to state that “*durability and visual attractiveness of materials will be carefully considered along with their texture, colour, tone and compatibility with existing materials.*” In this instance, the louvres are to be designed to match the colour and material of the existing window frames, which is a bronzed aluminium. By achieving a suitable colour match, the louvres would not appear obtrusive and would be respectful to the detailing of the existing building.

As stated above, the overarching principle of Policy D2 is to preserve, or enhance, the character and appearance of Heritage Assets. In this case the limited size of the louvres, together with their considered positioning, colour and materiality, ensures that they are discreet additions. The development is therefore considered to be sympathetic to, and would preserve the character and appearance of, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The proposed works are therefore considered to be in full accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan.

Amenity

Policy A1 (Managing the Impacts of Development) seeks to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected from new development. Policy A4 (Noise and Vibration) specifically requires that noise and vibration from plant or machinery is controlled and managed to minimise harm to amenity.

In this instance, the plant is proposed to be located internally. As the louvres are simply for air intake and extraction, any noise generated would be minimal and would not give rise to any harmful impact on the amenity currently enjoyed by occupiers of the building or neighbouring properties. The development would therefore be in full compliance with the requirements of Policies A1 and A4.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to comply with relevant policies of the Camden Local Plan, namely Policies D1, D2, A1 and A4. The proposed louvres, necessary for ventilation, are discreet and modest addition that would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the building and street scene, would preserve the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity.

Application Enclosures


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 Floor Plan and Elevations, prepared by Fowler Martin
- Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations, prepared by Fowler Martin; and
- Louvre product specification.

The application fee of £490 (including £28 planning portal fee) 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 (0203 486 3312) or Paige Ireland (0207 333 6277) of this office.

Yours faithfully,



Gerald Eve LLP