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Planning Services  
London Borough of Camden  
5 Pancras Square  
London  
N1C 4AG

### **Via Planning Portal**

July 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Re: Full planning and listed building consent for the temporary installation of a pavilion structure within the disused car park adjacent to Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU**

On behalf of our client, University of London, please find enclosed an application for full planning and listed building consent for the temporary installation of a pavilion structure, including stepped and seated areas with flexible floorspace underneath, within the disused car park adjacent to Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU.

In addition to this covering letter, the submission comprises the following documents:

- Application form signed and dated
- Location plan
- Existing and proposed site plan;
- Existing and proposed elevations;
- Existing and proposed sections;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Heritage Statement (included within this Planning Covering Letter); and
- Schedule of Works (included within this Planning Covering Letter).

The planning application fee has been paid directly to the London Borough of Camden via the Planning Portal.

### **Site Context**

The application site is situated within the disused car park between Senate House's South Block and North Block. Senate House is the administrative centre of the University of London, situated in the heart of Bloomsbury.

Senate House was designed by Charles Holden and constructed between 1932 and 1937. The original plan consisted of a single structure stretching from Montague Place to Torrington Street, with a central corridor linked by a series of wings and courtyards – one for each member institution. The scheme was to be topped by two towers; the taller Senate House and a smaller one to the north. However, due to a lack of funds and the onset of WWII, the full design was gradually cut back, and only the Senate House and library were completed in 1937.

Various elements on the site remain Grade II\* listed, this includes the cast iron railings on the stone walls, the gates in a radial pattern, pillars, and the pilaster with lamps.



A key part of Charles Holden's brief was the requirement for Senate House to harmonise with the surrounding buildings in the area. These included the earlier buildings such as the British Museum, UCL and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

### Planning Designations and Planning History

The key planning designations relevant to the application site are as follows:

- Within the curtilage of the Grade II\* Listed Senate House;
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area; and
- PTAL Rating of 6b (Best).

The application site has no relevant planning history.

### **The Proposal**

This full planning and listed building consent application seeks permission for the temporary installation of a pavilion structure within the disused car park adjacent to Senate House and Malet Street. The proposed temporary structure would occupy 325m<sup>2</sup> of the disused car park, including 150m<sup>2</sup> of usable stepped and seated areas and 45m<sup>2</sup> of flexible space beneath the steps.

The pavilion structure is a temporary experiment that seeks to encourage the community to engage with the university in an increased capacity. The key driver for this pavilion is to aid the students to feel more connected to their university.

It has been designed to encourage reusability. The hybrid timber with steel connection's structure allows for continued assembly and reassembly, promoting its sustainability aspirations. Each aspect is designed in components, this reiterates the concept of a holistic quick assembled structure that once removed returns the site to its pre-existing conditions.

The introduction of planters continues the greening from outside of the site and brings it into the space. The scale of the pavilion also aids movement and is an initial welcome to students and visitors alike, with its shape guiding users into the cloisters within Senate House.

Full details of the proposed works are provided within the supporting Design & Access Statement and architectural drawing pack.

### **Pre-Application**

The scope of this full application has been agreed following a comprehensive programme of engagement with the local authority and key stakeholders.

A pre-application site visit was held with LB Camden in May 2021. The pre-application discussions and feedback were positive, with overall support for the proposed works.

A further pre-application site visit was also held with Twentieth Century Society, who have expressed their support for the current proposal, outlining that the temporary nature of the pavilion does not negatively impact its historical surroundings.

## Planning Policy and Guidance

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas. Section 16 of the Act states that:

*“[...]In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority all the Secretary of State show had special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.*

In considering whether to grant listed building consent the decision maker shall:

*“... have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

Section 72 of the Act sets out a similar duty regarding conservation areas, namely the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area:

*“[...]With respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area”.*

Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (NPPF) states that, in terms of assessing the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset:

*“...great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”*

Where a development would lead to “less than substantial” harm, paragraph 202 of the NPPF advises that:

*“...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

### London Plan (2021)

In March 2021 the Mayor adopted the London plan. This is operative as the mayor’s special development strategy and forms part of the development plan for Greater London. The policy pertaining to heritage includes HC1 Heritage conservation and growth:

*“(C) development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the asset’s significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The commutative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage asset and the setting should also be actively managed. Development proposal should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations earlier on in the design process”.*

Policies GG2, GG5 and GG6 set out London’s “Good Growth” strategy – that which is socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable.



Policies D4 and D14 provide guidance on the approach to delivering good design.

Camden Local Plan (2017)

Policy G1 states that the Council will create the conditions for growth to deliver facilities to meet Camden's identified needs and harness the benefits for those who live and work in the borough. The Council will deliver growth by securing high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings.

Policy D1 sets out the design requirements to secure high quality design in development. The Council will expect excellence in architecture and design and resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policy D2 will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

**Planning Considerations**

Principle of Development

The principle of development is strongly supported at all levels of planning policy, through strengthening the functions of the university and enhancing the overall student experience.

As noted above, the stepped pavilion structure is simply a temporary experiment that seeks to encourage the community to engage with the university in an increased capacity. The temporary nature of the proposals mean that no element will be permanently fixed to historic fabric. Each aspect is designed in components, this reiterates the concept of a holistic quick assembled structure that once removed returns the site to its pre-existing conditions.

On this basis, it is therefore considered the temporary pavilion structure fully adheres to all relevant planning policy and guidance.

**Heritage Statement**

It is acknowledged that the site lies within the curtilage of Senate House, which is Grade II\* Listed. As such, in keeping with London Plan Policy HC1 and Local Plan Policy D1 and D2, the proposals aim to protect, preserve, and enhance, the elements of historic significance.

The installation of the temporary pavilion structure would enhance the character and appearance of the Grade II\* heritage assets, whilst in turn, increasing Senate House's attractiveness to the student and wider community.

All works follow good conservation practices and principles and use traditional materials that are compatible with the traditional construction of the designated heritage assets. As mentioned above, each aspect is designed in components, this reiterates the concept of a holistic quick assembled structure that once removed returns the site to its pre-existing conditions.

On this basis, the proposals would have no long-term impact upon the Grade II\* heritage assets. The proposals ensure the site continues to contribute positively to the historic character of Senate House and the surrounding conservation area.

Overall, the proposals are therefore considered to be in alignment with the London Borough of Camden's policies on listed buildings and in alignment with the requirements of the NPPF Chapter 16. The proposals are also considered to adhere to the legislative requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### **Conclusions**

In keeping with national and local policy and guidance, the installation of the temporary pavilion structure respects the local context and character, whilst integrating well with the surrounding street scene. The proposal respects the form, fabric, design, and scale of their setting, as well as providing high-quality design.

We trust you have everything required to validate and determine this application within the statutory time frame. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this application, please do not hesitate to contact my Director, Nick Belsten, or me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R. Williamson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Ross Williamson

*Enc: As listed above*