



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

Via Planning Portal

August 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Listed building consent for temporary internal alterations within the entrance cloisters of Senate House, University of London, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU

On behalf of our client, University of London, please find enclosed an application for listed building consent for temporary internal alterations within the entrance cloisters of 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 section plan;
- Existing and proposed floor plan;
- Existing and proposed internal elevations;
- Design and Access Statement (including Schedule of Works); and
- Heritage Statement.

The application has been submitted directly to the London Borough of Camden via the Planning Portal.

Site Context

The application site is comprised of the entrance cloisters to Senate House, which 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.

The Cloisters

The Cloisters of Senate House, at ground floor level under the main tower, consists of the main route through the building between Malet Street and Russell Square. The four gated openings on the east and west long walls form a permeable route through the site.

The cloister has the original travertine floor, and walls of Portland stone, with broad fluted pilasters resting on a travertine plinth. A trabeated ceiling, divided into coffered bays has a muted two-tone paint scheme. Original bronze brazier style uplighters are mounted in each bay, and each ingress/egress point to the long (E/W) sides are accessed via three steps up to match the external paving level.

Decorative iron gates and over-panels are housed in each opening to the east and west (four to each side). The gates currently have a temporary arrangement of Perspex fitted over them in an attempt to render the space less susceptible to the elements.

Planning Designations and Planning History

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

- Grade II* Listed Senate House; and
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The application site has no relevant planning history.

The Proposal

The current proposals relate to internal works to improve accessibility, legibility, and security within Senate House, through alterations within the cloisters. These works are temporary and reversible and designed to allow for greater accessibility to Senate House. A detailed description of the proposed works is set out within the design and access statement provided by BDP.

The project seeks minor change to the space which is respectful of the heritage sensitivities of the Grade II* building. To create an enhanced centre of the University with an improved experience for prospective and existing students and visitors to the building.

Importantly, works will have a minimal impact upon the existing fabric of the space, with the temporary refurbishment projected to have a lifespan of 3-5 years, which can be demounted and is entirely reversible.

Works can be summarised as follows:

- Repairing any damage to existing doors and ceiling;
- Installing a raised timber floor with perimeter shadow gap (no interfacing of the existing wall or fixing to the floor);
- Installing glazed screens with slender steel framework in anodised dark bronze finish to match existing wall lights located on the four access doorways;
- Installing access ramps to main internal access doors with timber balustrades, featuring exhibition display;
- Installing a movable reception desk;
- Installing a subdivision to create stairway access to service doors; and
- Installing modular seating booths.

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

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 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 works will have a minimal impact upon the existing fabric of the space, with the temporary refurbishment projected to have a lifespan of 3-5 years, which can be demounted and is entirely reversible. The temporary nature of the proposals mean that no element will be permanently fixed to historic fabric. Each aspect is designed in components, which, once removed, returns the site to its pre-existing conditions.

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

Heritage and Design

It is acknowledged that the site lies within 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 temporary internal alterations 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. 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.

The proposed changes to the cloister lobby will reflect the established style and character of Senate House. The design of the proposed new installations has been carefully considered, so as to ensure that the new insert will sit comfortably in its context and read as a sympathetic element of the building.

Restoration of original features including doors, ceilings and fittings would enhance the heritage value of the building.

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.

In support of this listed building consent application, a comprehensive Heritage Statement has been prepared by Icenl. The assessment concludes that overall, the proposed scheme of works would have a beneficial effect on the significance of the listed building. The benefits are summarised here as:

- Betterment of internal features through sympathetic restoration;
- Preservation of original building fabric through amended public access;
- Preservation of original building fabric through stylistically appropriate floor covering;
- Removal of Perspex screens on external gates revealing the original ironwork design;
- Improvements to accessibility for all building users;
- Enhancements to security; and
- Enhancement to the functional use of the space, creating a welcoming and practicable entrance area.

Conclusions

In keeping with national and local policy and guidance, the temporary internal alterations respect 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



Ross Williamson

Enc: As listed above