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**Sent by email: [planning@islington.gov.uk](mailto:planning@islington.gov.uk)**

3 June 2019

Our ref: 11 12 13

Dear Anna Luu,

**P2019/1124/FUL The City University 10 Northampton Square London EC1V 0HB**

The Twentieth Century Society has been notified of the above application. The application seeks planning permission for a rooftop extension and window replacement works. The Society wishes to **object** to the above application owing to the harmful impact of the proposals on buildings we consider to be non-designated heritage assets.

The City University campus at Northampton Square was built between 1966 and 1974, with the first phase being opened in 1970. Before recent alteration work was undertaken the Society considered the City University to be one of the most complete examples of the work of Richard Sheppard, Robson and Partners anywhere in the country. We continue to hold the City University buildings in high regard and we view them as a fine work by a distinguished architectural firm practicing in the post-war era. In our view the buildings qualify as non-designated heritage assets. Sheppard Robson was founded in 1938 by Sir Richard Herbert Sheppard, and the practice has been responsible for a significant number of educational buildings around the country. Several university buildings by the firm have been given listed status, including additions to Imperial College and Brunel University in London, and their campus for Churchill College, Cambridge.

The focus of this application is the first phase of the complex completed by Sheppard Robson, which stands at the centre of City University campus and forms one edge of Northampton Square. City University was designed with sensitivity towards the surrounding area, particularly in how the Greater London Council specified a maximum roof height determined by the 45 degree angle from the centre of the surrounding roads, creating a high density university campus of an appropriate scale in relation to its neighbours. The investment in high-quality materials is notable, including copper fascias and hardwood-framed windows. The carefully considered material palette was maintained across all phases of the development, which when coupled with a high standard of workmanship resulted in a highly regarded university scheme built in the London in the post-war era.

The Society is opposed to the proposed roof extension to the central building on the site and the proposed wholesale window replacement. The addition of a dominant rooftop extension will negate the architect's intention of creating a series of carefully composed and scaled buildings, and will negatively impact on the

surrounding area which is something the original architects and planners were determined to avoid. The palette of materials seen across the buildings was purposefully limited, restricted to brown stock brick and concrete for external facades with copper fascia and roof detailing. There is no precedent in the original building for the curved wooden design of the proposed rooftop extension, and in our view this would compromise the attention paid to the design of the post-war buildings. The Society also considers refurbishment of existing windows to be a more appropriate option than replacement, as this would be sensitive to the building's original material palette and avoids unnecessary harm to the building's significance.

The London Borough of Islington's Local Plan specifies the following policy in relation to non-designated heritage assets:

Non-designated heritage assets, including locally listed buildings and shopfronts, should be identified early in the design process for any development proposal which may impact on their significance. The council will encourage the retention, repair and reuse of non-designated heritage assets. Proposals that unjustifiably harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will generally not be permitted. (Development Management Policy DM2.3 E)

The Society therefore considers it to be appropriate for this planning application to be refused, as the proposals are not conservation-led and will result in avoidable harm to the significance of these buildings. The Society has been made aware that a listing application for Sheppard Robson's City University campus has been submitted to Historic England, and we recommend that plans for alteration are suspended until a decision regarding statutory listing has been reached.

In light of the above information the Society wishes to object to this application and recommends that planning permission be refused. We would welcome a revision of the proposed scheme that is conservation-led and prioritises the protection of the buildings' architectural significance.

I trust that these comments are of use to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



**Grace Etherington**

Caseworker

Twentieth Century Society

**Remit:** The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.