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SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GREEN TRAVEL PLAN

(Revised May 2003)

1. Background

The School of Oriental and African Studies is Europe's leading centre for the study of Africa and Asia. The School comprises some 3,500 students and 420 staff.

The School is housed in three main buildings on a site adjacent Russell Square, which forms one part of the University of London's Bloomsbury Precinct. The School leases the land on which its Russell Square main buildings are situated. In addition the School has a satellite campus located at Vernon Square in the London Borough of Islington.

The School co-operates with the University of London in the general maintenance and upkeep of the University Precinct. The School does not own or manage any of the car-parking or cycle storage facilities located in the Bloomsbury Precinct area. At the time of the development of the School's Brunei Gallery in 1996, the School funded the pedestrianisation of the areas between the Gallery and its other main buildings, assisting the University in the removal of 55 car parking spaces. In 2001 the School developed its Vernon Square site offering some 15 car-parking spaces and facilities for storage of some 40 cycles.

During the last eight years the School has constructed two student residences in the southeast corner of the London Borough of Islington. With the co-operation of the Borough, car parking on-site was provided only for residential staff and for students with disabilities. The residences were built on sites specifically selected to be within walking distance of the School. In addition, the School provided generous secure cycle storage at the residences, whilst liaising with the University on improving facilities for cyclists at its main buildings. The residences were sold to a private company, on a lease back basis, and the responsibility for maintaining these facilities was transferred to the new owners.

As part of the School's Campus Development Plan, with the assistance of the University of London, it is intended that there should be a further reduction in the number of on-site car-parking facilities. At the same time there will be a further enhancement of storage provision for cyclists.

All car parking in the University of London Precinct is controlled and operated by the University. The School has an allocation of 130 car parking permits for 150 spaces which are also available to staff from all of the University of London institutions comprising the Bloomsbury Precinct. Car parking is restricted to staff only and priority is given to staff with disabilities.

The School controls and maintains car-parking and cycle storage at its Vernon Square Campus.

As a matter of policy the School owns no vehicles and does not pay mileage allowance to casual car users. Staff are required to submit claims for essential travel on the basis of use of public transport.

All information provided by the School to its members, its prospective members and visitors assumes that travel will be made by public transport. At the time of joining the School all new students are issued with full information about public transport in London and directed on how to apply for student travel discounts.

The School actively encourages the use of public transport by the provision of interest free annual season ticket loans to staff. The School being a public funded organisation is not permitted to use such monies to fund loans for season tickets or alternative means of travel; the School has decided to prioritise use of its limited private funds to offer annual season ticket loans to staff.

In addition to providing reasonably secure, well-lit cycle parking with CCTV surveillance, adequate facilities exist within the School for staff and students wishing to change and shower after journey.

A staff/student travel survey was carried out late 2000. It was decided that with relatively little turn over in staff and students repeatedly being asked to complete forms and questionnaires in relation to their studies that an annual survey would not receive any meaningful response. It was felt reasonable to expect students to respond once during their period of study at the School hence a tri-annual survey is to be undertaken.

2. STRATEGY

The Governing Body of the School is committed to the maintenance of existing policy and procedures. The School:

- Actively promotes the use of public transport, walking and cycling
- Owns no vehicles and requires staff where possible to use public transport when on official School business
- Actively supports the reduction in the number of University owned/operated parking spaces and would support a move to increasing charges

The School's Executive Board regularly reviews the School's travel policies and a designated member of staff liaises with the University of London in the matter of the provision of car parking, The School's Estates Department regularly reviews university wide issues regarding travel plans with representatives from the other colleges and the University of London.

3. CYCLING PROVISION

School buildings are well connected to the existing highway network.

There are existing shower and changing facilities at the School's main buildings, including adequate space for the storage of clothing and other items required by staff and students travelling in this way.

The School already has some reasonably secure, well-lit cycle parking facilities most of which is covered by CCTV surveillance at its Russell Square site, as part of its new development the School has improved facilities for cyclists by providing and maintaining an additional ten cycle stands. The School also provides cycle parking facilities at its Vernon Square campus.

4. PEDESTRIAN PROVISION

The walkways between the School's main buildings in Russell Square are well lit and both staff and students are already encouraged to walk between the buildings.

In 1996 the School funded the pedestrianisation of the areas between the Brunei Gallery and its other main buildings.

As part of its longer-term development proposals, the School is constructing an atrium to link the west façade of the Lasdun Philips Building to the proposed new west block. The atrium will allow improved access in the Philips Building for people with disabilities.

Good footway conditions and pedestrian crossing facilities already exist around all the School's main buildings. As part of its long-term development proposals the School is returning the edge of Torrington Square to its original height, with a raised kerb.

The School already provides at all its main buildings showers, changing facilities and lockers for those who walk to and from the site.

The School's two student halls of residence in the London Borough of Islington are sited adjacent to our Vernon Square Campus and within the walking catchment of the main Russell Square buildings. As part of this Plan, the School will continue to circulate route maps and information on pedestrian routes between the Islington sites and the School's main Russell Square buildings. The School takes advice from the Police and will continue to circulate information and recommendations on safe walking routes to and from work for the School's staff.

All the main School Buildings have permanent ramps for wheel chair access; where this is not feasible demountable ramps are available with call points to alert staff.

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The School already actively encourages its staff to use public transport, wherever practical, for business travel. The School owns no vehicles and staff are currently required to submit claims for essential travel on the basis of use of public transport.

The School already provides interest free annual season ticket loans to staff.

As part of this Plan, the School will continue to publicise existing local transport services for the routes that pass close to its main buildings.

At the time of joining the School, all new students are issued with full information about public transport in London. As part of this Plan, the School will continue with this practice.

Students are encouraged to apply for public transport discount cards; application forms are available from the School Registry.

6. CAR PARKING

The School has an allocation of 130 car-parking permits from the University of London; there are 150 spaces available. These spaces are available to all qualifying staff of the University of London based in the Bloomsbury precinct area that includes the following institutions:

SOAS, SSEES, Institute of Education, IALS, UCL, LSHTM, Birkbeck College, ULU, Senate House and the resident institutes of the University of London.

In general parking is only available on a “first come first serve” basis.

The School has 15 car-parking spaces at its Vernon Square campus; these are managed on the same basis as that for its Russell Square complex.

Car parking permits for the School are currently restricted to staff only and priority is given to staff with disabilities.

In 1996 the School assisted the University of London in the removal of fifty-five car parking spaces when the areas between Brunei Gallery and the School’s other main buildings were pedestrianised.

As part of its long-term development proposals the School intends a further reduction in the number of on-site parking facilities with the removal of permitted parking spaces along the east side of Torrington Square.

As a matter of current policy, the School owns no vehicles and does not pay mileage allowance to casual car users.

As part of this Plan the School will consider (if there is sufficient demand) car sharing initiatives including establishing a database of those members of staff willing to share car journeys and of those staff seeking such a facility.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

This Green Travel Plan will be implemented in accordance with the following principles:

- **Promotion**

The plan will be promoted positively to emphasize its benefits

- **Monitor and Review**

There will be a tri-annual staff and student travel survey.

- **Allocation of Resources**

A designated person will be responsible for over-seeing the implementation of this Plan, including, if there is sufficient demand, co-ordinating the car sharing register.

8. CONCLUSION

The School has already shown its understanding of the principles of “Green Travel”.

There are already in place a number of measures at the School’s main Russell Square buildings that help to minimise private car travel to and from these buildings and ensure that they are accessible by a choice of mode of transport. It is hoped that this Plan will enhance those existing measures.

Of the initiatives proposed in this Plan, the main ones are the enhancement of storage provision for cyclists and recognition of the need for constant review, and the continuing support for projects in an effort to reduce car-parking provision.