

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 16th November 2009. For further information see

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>

Delegated Report Members' Briefing		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	11/11/2009
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	16/11/09
Officer		Application Number(s)		
Charles Thuaire		2009/4042/P		
Application Address		Drawing Numbers		
Elm Village Estate Camden London NW1 0JG		See decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Landscaping works to 3 existing private open space areas within the Elm Village Estate (behind 2-12 Bergholt Mews; adjacent to 17-19 Rossendale Way; behind 67-75 Rossendale Way), including the erection of a single storey glazed greenhouse, timber storage unit, changes in ground levels and creation of raised planting beds, alterations to viewing platform overlooking canal and infilling of the canal access staircase by a retaining wall.				
Recommendation(s):		Grant permission		
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission		
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice		
Informatives:				

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	08	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	06		
Summary of consultation responses:	8 local residents on estate fully support proposals as they will markedly improve the visual amenity, security and utility of these 3 areas and whole estate					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>	<p><u>Regents Canal CAAC</u> not formally consulted, although they did comment by telephone (9.11.09) why the access staircase on the north section is being removed and why the overhanging balcony on the south section is not being removed.</p> <p><u>Regents Network</u> object to retention of viewing platform on southern section and would prefer its removal as it is an incongruous feature inappropriate to the canalside and barely used by residents; its reconstruction may not be sound in engineering terms nor be acceptable to British Waterways; its changed materials from timber to galvanised metal would make it more prominent and obtrusive and would detract from conservation area.</p> <p>No objection to bricking up of old access point as it is of little use and a safety risk, nor to other open space improvements.</p>					

Site Description

Large housing estate with 2 storey terraces of houses, owned and managed mainly by Housing Association, on NE side of Regents Canal and built in 1983 on former railway lands. It is bounded by Barker Drive to north and a private housing estate alongside Camley St to the east. The site borders the Regents canal conservation area on the towpath side of the retaining wall.

Relevant History

None

Relevant policies

SD1, SD6, B1, B3, B7, N8, T3

Regents Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement 2008

Assessment

The scheme has been promoted by the Housing Association in an attempt to improve 3 small landscaped areas which have proved to be unsafe or unsightly. It has been designed as a result of considerable public consultation with all residents and amended to reflect their views, hence the scheme has full support of the local community as evidenced by the consultation response.

It affects 3 existing private open space areas within the Elm Village Estate (behind 2-12 Bergholt Mews; adjacent to 17-19 Rossendale Way; behind 67-75 Rossendale Way), as follows-

1. a triangular paved area enclosed on all 3 sides by houses to the north of the estate;
2. a ramped and stepped accessway and staircase from the private footpath to the canal towpath on the NW corner of the estate near the Constitution pub;
3. a large embankment area with viewing platform overhanging the retaining wall on the southern end adjoining the private estate.

Proposals include the following-

1. repaving the tarmac surface with concrete paving, erection of a single storey glazed greenhouse in the middle.
2. removing ramp and staircase to canal towpath, infilling and levelling to create a level surface with raised planters and paving slabs; infilling gated opening on canalside with new brick wall and other landscaping works
3. changing ground levels to create a stepped embankment to create raised planting and allotment beds, erection of new timber storage unit and furniture, refurbishment of viewing platform by replacing rotten and unsafe timber flooring and balustrades by new galvanised metal ones.

The scheme has been revised, following concerns, to provide powder-coated balustrades, uprights and handrail on the platform rather than basic plain galvanised metal ones.

No objections are raised to the various landscaping works in principle, which are welcome and will not affect adjoining mature trees (a tree method statement has been submitted which is acceptable).

The greenhouse is the only new building proposed- its design, materials and location is acceptable and will not affect neighbour amenity in terms of loss of outlook, daylight or privacy, nor will it affect the streetscape as it is hidden away behind houses.

The removal of the canal staircase access is regrettable as it was deliberately installed by Camden/British Rail in the 1980's to improve access to the canal (along with another access point further south) from the new housing estates on this former railway goods yard. However the access here has not been available for general public usage ever since it was built as it was controlled by the Housing Association, only accessible via the housing estate private paths, and kept locked with key access by local residents; over time it has proved unpopular with residents due to anti-social behaviour arising from burglaries and drug taking. Its specific location and design makes it a community safety hazard and the Crime Prevention police advisor has recommended its removal. In

the circumstances, its blocking up is acceptable, especially as more direct and safer access from the public highway is maintained in the area by the staircase on the other side of St Pancras Way. The removal of the stairs and gate and its infilling with a new brick wall to match the existing retaining wall is acceptable in design and will preserve the character of the adjoining conservation area.

The overhanging balcony/viewing platform on the southern section of the retaining canal wall is considered by the CA statement as an incongruous feature. However despite comments made by local groups, it is not possible or reasonable to require its removal, which will actually prove very expensive to the owners as well as resulting in loss of a recreational facility of benefit to local residents. The works proposed here are acceptable in principle and will actually enhance the appearance of this structure. As revised, the rotten and unsafe timber elements will be replaced by new better designed powder-coated metal balustrades, handrails and flooring to match the grey colour and style of the existing support columns. Contrary to the objector's statement, there will be no supports placed on the towpath- indeed the support that is currently located on the tow path does not serve any structural purpose and will be removed. The reasons for choosing metal as the material to repair the viewing platform were based on two main reasons- to increase the durability of the platform and, more importantly, to make it harder for people to climb up onto the estate from the tow path. A major driver for the entire package of works was to improve the security of the estate as highlighted within the design and access statement. The redesigned platform in metal materials will preserve the industrial character of this part of the canalside and conservation area. The regrading to the embankment and creation of new planter beds, as well as a 1.2m high timber storage unit for the new allotments, is also considered acceptable and will enhance the local landscape and its use to the local community.

As the land is potentially contaminated from previous industrial/railway land uses, it is recommended that a condition be placed to require a ground investigation before works commence on site.

Recommendation- grant permission