

27-29 WHITFIELD STREET

2013/8158/P

I am an architect working and living in London. I sit on a number of Design Review Panels within London. I am aware of a planning application that has been submitted for No.27-29 Whitfield Street (Cyclone House). I understand that the applicant has made several additional submissions that attempts to deal with inconsistencies within the original applications. Nevertheless the accuracy of the current application is contested by a number of interested parties. Notwithstanding I make the following design comments based on the submitted material:

SETTING

The site falls within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. The area and setting of the proposals is characterised by the green open space of Colville Place. This provides valuable visual and actual amenity for residential, workers and visitors. More generally Colville Place forms part of a series of small and more formal public spaces that characterise Fitzrovia. The existing building relates appropriately to the properties on Colville Place. As such, the existing building creates an appropriate setting for the gardens at Colville Place. In townscape terms and the existing building makes an appropriate corner to the Colville Place terrace, whilst remaining subservient to its neighbour at 19 Goodge Street, where a taller building, at the corner of the principle east-west route (Goodge Street) is more appropriate.

The proposal does little to respect the existing setting. The setback floor to Colville Place results in a rather compromised shoulder height to Whitfield Street. The relationship to its neighbours on Whitfield Street and Colville Place are worsened.

DESIGN

The existing building is modest and clearly tired. However, it dates from a period which characterises much of the building stock in Fitzrovia, and whilst modest the detailing enriches the external appearance of the building. The proposals, in comparison are bland and scarcely improve the visual appearance of the existing building. The alterations to the Colville Place elevations are unsuccessful, particularly when view three-dimensionally. The roof top additions are clumsy.

AMENITY

Unlike the proposals, No.1 Colville Place is a refined piece and remains an important example of appropriately scaled and articulated modern insertion within an established street. In its own right the building is an important example of post war residential architecture and is finely detailed. The building is Grade 2 listed. The building current enjoys a private terrace at its third floor. The proposals negatively impact on the existing amenity to No.1 Colville Place, in terms of increased massing and overlooking. There is also louvered plant in close proximity.

On the basis of the forgoing I object to the proposals

Ben Gibson