

KINGS CROSS METHODIST CHURCH 58A BIRKENHEAD STREET LONDON

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PREPARED BY PEGASUS GROUP | WEST LONDON MISSION CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH (WLM) | DECEMBER 2015 | LON.0265



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**KING'S CROSS METHODIST CHURCH, 58A
BIRKENHEAD STREET, LONDON,**

**ON BEHALF OF WEST LONDON MISSION
CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH (WLM)**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of King's Cross Methodist Church, 58A Birkenhead Street. This SCI will detail all of methods of consultation utilised and will present feedback received during the consultation process.
- 1.2 This SCI explains how members of the public and key stakeholders have influenced the proposals.
- 1.3 This document should also be read in conjunction with the full planning submission including the Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The NPPF endorses the importance of engagement and empowerment of local people as part of the planning process. Paragraph 17 sets out land use planning principles, which include empowering local people to shape their surroundings.
- 2.2 Paragraph 69 also states local planning authorities should create shared vision with communities to deliver facilities they wish to see. *As such "local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in planning decisions..."*
- 2.3 Paragraphs 188 – 191 relate to the pre-application engagement. The Framework continues to highlight how early engagement has a significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system. The NPPF also states:
- "Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community".*
- 2.4 Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications".
- 2.5 The NPPF and the Localism Act encourage public consultation; however this is not a mandatory requirement. The applicant undertook a public consultation exercise in the form of a public exhibition when as soon as practical in the bid process.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 This section expands on the consultation processes undertaken to date.

Pre-application Discussions

3.2 The Project Team (Dexter Moren Architects and Pegasus Group) have met with the Camden Council to discuss the proposals on numerous occasions. A detailed summary of these meetings is provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Public Exhibition

3.3 A public consultation exercise in the form of an exhibition took place on 25th January 2015. This was open from 3pm until 5 pm for local residents and members of the church community. The exhibition took place within the King's Cross Methodist Church (KXMC).

3.4 The consultation event was advertised two weeks prior to the event, through a formal leaflet drop to residents. An example of the notice and confirmation of the drop area is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.5 Members of the development team manned the exhibition, forming representatives from the KXMC Working Group, Dexter Moren Architects and Pegasus Group (Planning Consultant).

3.6 The consultation comprised of 13 boards displaying information about the existing site and the work of the KXMC alongside illustrative plans of the proposals to demonstrate how the site could look within the context of Crestfield Street and Birkenhead Street.

3.7 Visitors were encouraged to sign an attendance sheet and comments sheets were available at the exhibition for members of the public to record their views. Visitors were encouraged to fill them in there and then, but a return email address was also provided.

4. FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the feedback received from the public exhibition.
- 4.2 The exhibition was attended by 29 visitors, and a total of 17 comments sheets were completed on the day (a copy is attached at **Appendix 2**). The attendees of the exhibition included members of the public and members of the church.
- 4.3 Visitors were provided with an opportunity to express their views regarding the proposals, members of the development team were on hand to answer any questions and where concerns were raised members of the project team have reported into the feedback process. These comments were recorded on the day informally.
- 4.4 Feedback received from the consultation event can be summarised as follows:

Positive

- The majority of the members of the church supported the proposals.
- A very creative proposal - respects the conservation principles and enhances the street.
- Consider the use of energy saving techniques.
- Crestfield façade should merge with the brick built street with a deeper second basement.
- Improved security and lighting for the church.
- Design of the Crestfield Street frontage shows that the church is 'coming out' into the neighbourhood.

Concerns

- The building façade is a little bulky and it would benefit from a set back to tie into the existing building line.
- Concerns have been raised over the long term maintenance and cost of the building.
- The entrance to the church should be more prominent.

- Concerns over the height of the building and the prominence of the Crestfield elevation within the street scene.
- Concerns relating to the prominence and location of the balconies on Birkenhead Street in comparison to the Georgian – style façade.
- The appearance of the building should not be commercial in nature.
- Retention of the Birkenhead Street façade, with Birkenhead Street utilised for the church and Crestfield Street utilised for the residential element.

4.5 In addition to the above comments a summary of the responses to the questionnaire is provided below.

4.6 A total of 17 visitors took the time to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback. Of the 17 respondents 14 people attended KXMC, 16 people were aware of the community activities undertaken and 16 respondents also thought that the improvements would improve the charitable service of the Mission in future.

4.7 Of the 17 respondents who answered the questionnaire, 12 people were connected to the church, 2 people worked in the area and three people lived in the area.

4.8 All of the respondents thought that the proposals were appropriate for the location.

4.9 With regard to Crestfield Street, 12 of the respondents thought that the entrance to the church would be better on Crestfield Street, whilst 4 of the respondents 'did not know'. 14 of the respondents thought that the Crestfield elevation looked like a modern church, whilst 4 'did not know'. A total of 16 respondents thought that the Crestfield Street elevation preserved and enhanced the character of the street.

4.10 With regard to Birkenhead Street, 15 of the respondents thought that the Birkenhead Street is an appropriate location for new homes and a total of 17 people thought that the Birkenhead Street elevation preserves and enhances the street.

5. RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

5.1 Following receipt of the questionnaires the Project Team has sought to address the specific concerns raised by members of the public and the Planning and Conservation Officers at Camden Council.

5.2 In response to the concerns raised in Paragraph 4.4 above the following amendments have been made:

- The building façade along Birkenhead Street follows the alignment of the existing building. The Crestfield Street façade largely corresponds to the building line, with the exception of the church entrance which protrudes out into Crestfield Street to signify the presence of KXMC.
- The long term management and maintenance will be the responsibility of KXMC. Prior to considering the demolition and redevelopment of the KXMC a study was undertaken to assess various options. These options were to 'Do -Nothing', 'Repair and Maintain' and 'Redevelop'. A full summary of these options is provided within the Design and Access Statement. The 'Do-Nothing' scenario was discounted as the building would have become unsafe and unusable overtime. The 'Repair and Maintain' option was discounted as the cost of reinstating the existing building was excessive having regard to the likely remaining useful life of the building.
- The entrance to the KXMC has been designed to appear as a prominent feature. This is derived from the scale and height of the building on Crestfield Street and also the protrusion into the street along with the materials that have been selected.
- The height of the building (Crestfield Street and Birkenhead Street) has been dramatically reduced to respond to concerns raised by members of the public and Officers at Camden Council. The reduction in height is documented in the Design and Access Statement.
- The positioning of balconies on the Birkenhead Street elevation has been revised to respond to the fenestration and alignment of the balconies of the existing buildings.

- Both of the elevations (Crestfield Street and Birkenhead Street) have significantly reduced in scale. The Crestfield Street elevation retains its appearance as a church, but is more domestic in scale compared to the previous proposals. The fenestration, horizontal and vertical alignment of the design ensures that the proposals contributes to the existing townscape. On Birkenhead Street, the proposed elevation responds to the neighbouring buildings in height, scale and proportion creating a sympathetic addition to the street scene.
- The Project Team have considered a variety of options for the retention of the Birkenhead Street façade, these have also been presented to Camden Council. The reconfiguration of the façade continued to create inefficient spaces and the accessibility of the entrance on Birkenhead Street is poor.

As part of the redevelopment proposals KXMC wanted to announce its presence within the street, this presence is currently lacking at the application site. Due to the sensitive environment on Birkenhead Street it was not possible to create this 'presence' and therefore the entrance to KXMC will be taken from Crestfield Street where there is greater magnitude to accommodate a building of increased scale.

The revised elevation for Birkenhead Street responds to the domestic scale of the street to contribute to the townscape in this sensitive location.

APPENDIX 1: INVITATIONS

Letter Drop Area



Sample Invitation

6th January, 2015

Friends of Argyle Square
44 Kings Terrace
London
NW1 0JR

By email and post

Dear Sir / Madam

Consultation on Plans to Re-Build Our Church at Kings Cross

We are writing to you to let you know about our proposals for the future of our church and associated facilities at Kings Cross. We have previously discussed our desire to improve the facilities at our church.

The Kings Cross Methodist Church is thriving. Our congregations are growing, as are the community activities that take place on our premises. We have a Residential Student Community where the 24 members commit themselves to serving in the church and the local neighbourhood. There are well-used facilities for various community groups to meet during the week.

Our buildings are old and fall seriously short of modern standards. For example, there is no way of accessing many of our facilities for those who are disabled; ancillary spaces such as kitchen facilities are inadequate and in particular, the disposition of space is severely limited and awkward and outdated. The ancillary residential accommodation is inadequate and deficient in terms of modern standards and requirements. The buildings are increasingly difficult and expensive to heat and maintain.

As you may be aware, we have been investigating the possibility of a complete re-development of the site. The aim is to provide up-to-date, high-standard facilities – with more space not only to meet the needs of our growing congregations but also to accommodate a more diverse range of activities that can bring benefits to the increasing numbers of residents, workers and travellers in our neighbourhood.

We have already had two "Pre-App" meetings with the Camden Planning Department. However, before we proceed any further, we would like to invite you to come and view our proposals for yourselves. We welcome your comments and hopefully your support for our plans. Enclosed is a leaflet we have prepared which explains the key messages and drivers for our proposals.

We are holding a consultation event at the church on 25th January at 3pm – 5pm. We will be available to discuss our proposals and we would welcome your thoughts. If this date is not suitable for you, please feel free to suggest an alternative date.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Keegan von Allmen
Superintendent Minister,
West London Mission
House

Kong Ching Hii
Minister,
Kings Cross Methodist Church

Linda Gilson
Deacon,
Methodist Chaplaincy

APPENDIX 2 FEEDBACK FORM

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