

**Report of Camden Design Review Panel meeting to discuss  
Middlesex Hospital Annex**

Tuesday 21 June 2016

Room 11.13, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG

**Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Catherine Burd  
Eleanor Fawcett  
Luke Tozer  
Paddy Pugh

**Planning authority and stakeholder attendees**

Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden
Gavin Sexton	London Borough of Camden (case officer)
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Edward Bailey	London Borough of Camden
Remi Waters	London Borough of Camden (observer)
Alasdair Young	Historic England

**Frame Projects**

Deborah Denner  
Roland Karthaus

**Confidentiality**

This is a pre-application review and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Camden is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review. Should the project proceed to a planning application, all pre-application documents will be made public in accordance with Camden's policies.

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## 1. Project name and site address

Middlesex Hospital Annex, Cleveland Street, W1T 4JU

A site visit was conducted by the panel prior to the review.

## 2. Presenting team

Peter Burroughs	University College London Hospital Charity
Mark Furlonger	Temple Group
Steven Bee	Urban Counsel
Bert McCabe	Llewelyn Davies
Paul Barnes	Llewelyn Davies

## 3. Background

The proposals include extensive redevelopment of the site, including refurbishment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed Strand Union workhouse and some later buildings and the redevelopment of buildings within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area to the rear of the site. Both market and affordable residential units are proposed including family (3 bed) units, together with office / research provision (B1/D1 flexible use class). Several previous schemes had been developed for the site but not progressed. Agreements are in place with surrounding landowners for rights to light and related matters. The client's objectives are to generate income to fund health services within the Borough of Camden.

## 4. Planning authority's views

Camden's aspirations for the site include the provision of high-quality housing, including affordable housing; and high quality public realm, including new urban connections, in accordance with the Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (FAAP). The heritage assets of the site, including the listed building should be preserved where appropriate and enhanced.

## 5. Stakeholder's views

Historic England wish to see a careful analysis and interpretation of the form and history of the listed building and the later additions and their contribution to the conservation area. They are keen to see a sustainable use of the buildings and site; a response to the austere character of the workhouse and a balance of permeability and enclosure.

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## 6. Design Review Panel's views

### *Summary*

The site presents a rare and exciting opportunity to enhance the character of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area through the restoration and repair of an important listed building and the creation of a new pedestrian path, Bedford Passage, through the street block. The mix of uses is considered generally appropriate, although the exact type and character of commercial use proposed is unclear, and the panel questioned its proposed location. The information presented was lacking in contextual analysis and sensitivity to the site, which the panel would expect any proposal to be based upon. Overall the panel were not convinced by the approach taken by the design team and recommended going back to first principles. A careful and considered analysis and interpretation of all the existing buildings on the site should be undertaken to understand their existing and potential contribution to the character of the conservation area. This should then be used to clearly demonstrate a series of careful decisions about the removal, adaptation, re-use or replacement of each part. Achieving a high quality of place-making along Bedford Passage should be an important objective of the design work, with careful thought given to the proposed link to Tottenham Mews. A clearer distinction between private residential space and the public realm should also be considered. Achieving this will require different types of drawing and models from those presented: detailed sections, more detailed massing models and a 3-dimensional approach to the relationship between different uses. A clear vision for the type and character of public realm to be created is imperative to drive finely-tuned design decisions and deliver a convincing scheme. The panel were clear that fundamental re-design should be undertaken and the scheme reviewed again prior to a planning application being made.

### *Mix and location of uses*

- The mix of uses appears to be generally appropriate, however the type and character of the commercial elements is key to their contribution to the character of the place: fine-grain, small scale, individual units could have a positive public realm contribution; whilst undivided, vertically stacked floor plates would be unlikely to.
- The location of each of the uses arises from a 'zoning' approach to the site, applied in plan only. This clearly causes conflicts between servicing, public, semi-public and private access and amenities. This is a particular problem in relation to the access to the commercial space that passes through the market housing. A better approach may be to locate the commercial space to the south of the site fronting Bedford Passage.
- Going back to first principles would allow a place-making approach to the site, where the constraints and opportunities of each use can be considered for their contribution and located accordingly, in 3 dimensions.

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## *Heritage assets*

- The existing buildings should be considered as a set of assets, which contribute in different ways to the conservation area and to the primary heritage asset of the listed workhouse.
- Whilst demolition of non-listed elements may be acceptable, decisions to do so must be based on a series of finely-tuned decisions about opening up and enhancing the space, with a clearer intention about the character of place and quality of experience to be created.
- A rigorous and careful analysis of the existing buildings and their history must be undertaken in order to be able to make and explain these decisions.
- A much more detailed and accurate 3D model of the space should be made to explore and explain the moves and intentions of the design proposals.
- Consideration could be given to extensions or adjustments to the listed building, provided they are explored and presented with the highest level of design skill.

## *Public realm and urban connections*

- The proposal to create a new footpath through the block is welcomed, although its relationship to private amenity spaces and servicing routes is currently conflicting and ambiguous.
- A clearer distinction should be made between public routes and private amenity space, and uses should be organised to avoid conflicts and promote a strong quality and character of place.
- The panel felt that the main priority for the public realm should be ensuring that Bedford Passage is an attractive and safe footpath through the street block, and that any new elements of 'open space' should contribute to this objective.
- There should therefore be a clear, visualised answer to the question 'what will Bedford Passage feel like?', including the scale and type of uses along it; whether it is bicycle friendly or pedestrian only. The possible future link to the northern end of Tottenham Mews should also be given careful consideration.
- The proposed space on Cleveland Street is ambiguous and its purpose should be reconsidered in relation to the adjacent uses.
- It is not clear whether the existing wall on Cleveland Street is historically valuable in itself and the panel questioned whether this should be retained, and suggested that greater openness could create a better relationship with the street.

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## *Private amenity and neighbouring sites*

- The current adjacencies both within the site and with its neighbours create potentially unsatisfactory relationships and poor private amenity. Detailed sections through the urban block should be used together with accurate 3D models to understand the constraints and opportunities.

## *Information presented*

- The presentation was lacking in contextual analysis and sensitivity to the site which the panel would expect any proposal to be based upon.
- No information was presented regarding proposed materials or articulation of the buildings and the external spaces.
- Whilst still at an early stage of development, the panel were concerned that technical arrangements of the scheme such as structural grid, servicing, space planning and access were presented as more advanced than the character and quality of the proposals, which should be leading the design.

## *Next steps*

The Design Review Panel looks forward to a further opportunity to review proposals based on the approach set out above, prior to the preparation of a planning application.

In presentation for the next Design Review Panel meeting, the design team should set out clearly their understanding of the existing site and assets and approach to building on these assets as part of a high quality new development.