

## Public realm

- The public realm is still of key concern, particularly the north-south section behind the retained listed building.
- Architects' aim is to open up the public open space by creating a series of linked spaces / 'outdoor rooms', with an overhang on the new building to allow more floor space at the upper levels of the building, however, there was some confusion about the depth/extent of the overhang.
- The scheme proposes the use of undercroft planting and SUDs etc. The basement below means that trees would be planted in raised planters. Otherwise, species would be chosen on the basis of their tolerance for low plant soil levels / limited sunlight etc.
  
- The precedent images provided are not considered to be relevant to this scheme. The location and orientation of this public open space is quite different, and the fact the space will also provide the route to the entrance to the affordable housing makes it difficult to provide a clear use and character.
- Putting the route to the affordable housing along the side of the office (the eastern side of the north-south section of public open space) is considered to be acceptable; however, **the use of an overhang over part of the public open space is not supported by officers**, as it creates a negative space below and doesn't respond to the passage. Officers are not aware of successful precedents for this approach. **A single vertical building line is considered to be the most appropriate solution to overcome this immediate concern.**
- Related to this, officers remain of the view that **the southern building line needs to respond to the line of Bedford Passage**. This would provide the line of sight from one end of the site to the other. Where there is the need for recovering floor space as a result of a revised building line there may be some flexibility to change the west building line, subject to it responding well to the public open space.
- **The open space needs to be welcoming and provide for a sense of arrival.** To this extent, officers are encouraged that there have been some efforts to shape the building in an attempt to respond to the open space. However, stepping in the building as proposed (currently limited to a cutaway under an overhang with sharp corners / edges) would create a negative edge to the public space. **It is recommended to step in the building orthogonally instead, or create a chamfer, across the full height of the building.**
- **Officers are still not convinced by the character proposed for the courtyard space, which still seems to suffer from the lack of a simple, realistic and informed brief.** You may wish to consider using the north-south section of the public open space for public, informal play space (both as doorstep play for the affordable units and for use by the general public). This does not need to be in the form of formal play equipment, instead it could be in the form of a playable landscape. Sarah notes that there is scope to incorporate something on the blank rear wall of the retained listed building for this purpose (where the later additions are being taken away) (N.B. the play strategy for the wider site is not known at this stage; it needs to be integral to the design of the wider site and Peabody will need to be happy with it too)
- Officers consider that there should be no impediment to people entering the space. The entrance to the space from the south needs to be open and inviting and officers consider that the raised timber platform would be contrary to this aim. The use of differing surface treatments would be acceptable instead.
- We need to know what the management/maintenance regime will be for the open space. An intense planting scheme and high maintenance requirements is not necessarily

recommended due to possible implications of a service charge; however, officers would like to understand if there is the possibility for community adoption of areas of planting.

- The public open space should not appear as if it belongs to the office, **there needs to be a clear demarcation between private and public space**, perhaps in the form of a low wall with railings above, or outwards facing seating. Buffer planting may be considered acceptable, if it incorporates seating. Any seating should face away from the office into the public open space and/or the passage.
- Officers are willing to explore the possibility of incorporating **a modest, open lightwell along the southern edge** of the new building (not adjacent to the north-south section of public open space), subject to building line changes, as this would provide a clearly defined boundary between the private offices and the public open space, while improving the quality of the basement accommodation. Outwards facing seating could be incorporated along the edge.
- There is an opportunity to create a more active node at the northern end of Tottenham Mews in the future. This must be borne in mind when designing the adjacent part of the passage and building (see comments below about the entrances to the buildings)

## Design of building

### *Elevations*

- There is a need for greater coherency and clarity to the overall building design.
- There is also a need to consider the visual impact of the taller elements of the scheme in views from Cleveland Street, above and between the retained buildings at the front (west) of the site (e.g. impact on the setting of listed buildings and impact on character and appearance of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area and the setting of the Cleveland Street CA in Westminster).
- The extent of projections and recessions incorporated into the elevations is not supported; as discussed at the meeting, **the building needs to have a single primary plane**.
- Currently, the office space and residential space have the same outward appearance; however, **we recommend that the office space be more 'honest' in its appearance**.
- Officers support the use of raised cills in the office space (i.e. not floor to ceiling glazing); however, you may wish to consider the use of some wider openings to reflect the presence of the office space, which would also give it a different appearance to the residential floors.
- **There should not be Juliet balconies on the office windows.**
- The residential openings at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level do not need to be so uniform or small. There is an opportunity to mix and match the openings (rather than repeat the 2 windows per room design used currently).
- The use of inset balconies at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level is supported; however, the cutaways are seemingly random. Furthermore, the use of solid balustrades on the residential floors will reduce the feeling of light and space within the dwellings.
- The compactness of the 3rd floor courtyard means it would benefit from greater openness to the south by re-distributing some of the bulk from the central section of the top floor of the southern side of the building.
- **Officers recommend that the projecting element of the level 4/5 duplex on the western side of the building is omitted from the scheme** to give a vertical building line from the podium upwards (this is subject to a discussion on the accommodation schedule)
- There is a need to consider the use of materials and how to articulate the facades and break up the overall massing of the building so that it does not overwhelm its surroundings / the passage (the architects are now proposing the use of different coloured bricks)

- We require a typical bay study at 1:20, including sections, typical inset balcony details, details of 2x main entrances, details of the corner into the public open space.

#### *Entrances*

- Officers welcome the relocation of the office entrance to the Bedford Passage side, as this will create interest / activity in the passage, and avoids the new public open space appearing as a forecourt to the office space (see comments above). The entrance can also provide a focal point to Tottenham Mews in the future.
- **Both entrances need to be more celebratory in their level of design and detail;** they must announce themselves.
- We question the design of the projecting double-height element adjacent to the office entrance as it compromises the quality of the entrance. **We recommend the omission of the projecting element** and the use of walk-on glazing here if light is needed in the basement (or the open lightwell may negate the need for this element).
- The affordable housing entrance must also announce itself and it must be visible at the end of the route to it through the public open space.
- **The entrance to the affordable housing should be on a primary plane of the elevation (i.e. no overhang above)** (a small canopy would be acceptable, if required for Building Regs).
- Officers consider that the balconies above the affordable housing entrance could be better resolved, as they provide a visual distraction above the entrance. We recommend **the use of inset (or half-inset) balconies above the affordable housing entrance**, to reduce their impact on the entrance and give the entrance greater prominence (and also to mitigate overlooking concerns at level 3). In doing this, **it would be possible to pull the whole building line forward.**

#### *Roof terrace*

- We need more details on this.
- As noted above, we need to see a play strategy for the site. If it is anticipated that play will be a feature of the roof, we need to know if balustrading/caging etc. will be required and how this would be designed. (Peabody should be consulted about this early on in the design stages)

#### *Dwelling layout*

- The 4x duplexes surrounding the courtyard need to be dual-aspect with active windows onto the courtyard (we strongly suggest swapping the utility rooms and bathrooms to provide open plan living room / kitchens that span the length of the units)

### **Listed building / heritage**

- There remains the need to see an assessment of the historic fabric and a full set of up to date proposed drawings.
- There is the need for a separate meeting to discuss outstanding heritage issues further, and to arrange a site visit with Alasdair Young.
- Recommended that existing main entrance should be used as the entrance to one of the units (to avoid wasting space internally), with main entrance for other units at side (subject to adjacent ground levels and creating level access to the building).

### **Housing mix and numbers**

- Yet to receive accommodation schedule so cannot comment.

## Other

- Need to finalise PPA
- Design team to send through a draft set of verified views for review, to be agreed before submission
- Updated set of plans / elevations / sections to be submitted for further comment

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Officers are still not convinced by the character proposed for the courtyard space, which still seems to suffer from the lack of a simple, realistic and informed brief.
- The use of an overhang above the public open space and affordable housing entrance is not acceptable.
- A single vertical building line is the preferred approach.
- The southern building line must respond to the line of Bedford Passage.
- The corner of the building needs to respond to the public open space, either in the form of an orthogonal step-in, or by creating a chamfer across the full height of the building
- A play strategy is required (the north-south section of public open space could play a role in facilitating informal play space, both for the affordable units and the general public)
- There should be a visual difference between the office space and residential uses.
- Both main entrances to the new building (office and affordable housing) need to be more celebratory in design and appearance.
- The design of the balconies above the affordable housing entrance needs amending to reduce their prominence and allow the affordable housing entrance to have greater prominence.
- The duplexes surrounding the courtyard all need to provide active windows onto the courtyard.
- The elevation treatment needs more coherence and clarity.