



**Report of Camden Design Review Panel meeting to discuss  
Camden Goods Yard**

Friday 31 March 2017

Allies and Morrison's Offices, 85 Southwark Street, London SE1 0HX

**Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)  
Catherine Burd  
Jane Dann  
Robin Nicholson  
Adrian Wikeley

**Planning authority attendees**

Kevin Fisher	London Borough of Camden
Gavin Sexton	London Borough of Camden
Alfie Stroud	London Borough of Camden
Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden

**Frame Projects**

Tom Bolton  
Deborah Denner

**Apologies**

Frances Madders	London Borough of Camden
Ed Jarvis	London Borough of Camden

**Confidentiality**

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## 1. Project name and site address

Camden Goods Yard, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 8AA

## 2. Presenting team

Bob Allies	Allies and Morrison
Marco Colaiacomo	Allies and Morrison
Hendrik Heyns	Allies and Morrison
Kirsty Leslie	Allies and Morrison
Craig Mitchell	Allies and Morrison
Niall McLaughlin	Niall McLaughlin Architects
Tilo Guenther	Niall McLaughlin Architects
Jaqueline Stephen	Niall McLaughlin Architects
Stuart Piercy	Piercy & Co.
David Cawston	Piercy & Co.
Attzaz Rashid	Barratt London
Martin Scholar	Barratt London
Michael Lowndes	Turley
Ian Fergusson	Turley
Oliver Jefferson	Turley
Rob Copeland	Gillespies
Oliver Duguid	Gillespies

## 3. Background

The site incorporates a petrol filling station on Chalk Farm Road and a Morrisons supermarket with above-ground car parking. The supermarket and car park form part of a larger site, formerly known as Camden Goods Yard. It is bounded by railway lines to the north and south west; the Regent's Canal to the south; Chalk Farm Road and the buildings along it to the east; a housing estate to the north-west; and housing and mixed-use sites along the canal to the south-east. Access to the site is very restricted, with vehicular access only possible beneath the railway line from Chalk Farm Road. Pedestrian access is from Oval Road through an alleyway, and via a lift from the car park area into Camden Market. Most of the site is several metres above surrounding ground level, and the eastern corner overlies the Stables Market below.

There are several listed buildings around the site and historic remnants of the Victorian railway infrastructure below and around the site edges. Historically the Goods Yard included a number of buildings, several now listed (the Roundhouse [Grade II\*], Stables Yard [Grade II\*], Stanley Sidings Stables [Grade II]), The Interchange [Grade II],) and below ground (the Winding Engine House [Grade II]). The supermarket site is not in a conservation area, but the Primrose Hill Conservation Area lies to the west and to the south. The Petrol Filling Station is in the Regent's Canal Conservation Area, along with Camden Lock and Stables Markets and the Roundhouse. The Harmood Conservation Area lies further to the north east and the Eton Conservation Area to the north-west. A viewing corridor from Primrose Hill also crosses the site.



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The proposal is for a mixed-use scheme incorporating a replacement supermarket, retail, workspace, housing and associated facilities, landscaping and public spaces.

## **4. Planning authority's views**

The applicant has made a number of changes to designs since their presentation to the Camden Design Review Panel in December 2016.

Camden officers are strongly of the opinion that the site deserves a high quality scheme, rooted in the site's history, with a creative character, equipped to meet future workspace needs. They are broadly supportive of the layout of the scheme, and believe the scheme is developing well, with progress made on issues raised at the last design review including overall heights and shoulder heights, massing and architectural quality. The scheme still needs to demonstrate how landscape and architecture will come together to create a sustainable character for the site as a place to work and to live, and as a mixed use neighbourhood with a strong sense of community. Officers are also keen to see a strategic route created through the east side of the site alongside the railway line, a potential link in a longer term route to Chalk Farm Station or a rebuilt Primrose Hill Station. While potential conflicts between night time activity and residential use will need to be resolved, this is a key objective. The panel was asked for its reflections on character, height and locations, quality of space and routes, and architecture.

A masterplan, models, plans, elevations, view studies and kinetic views were presented for the panel to review. Detailed designs were also reviewed for each of the blocks proposed for the site, presented by the architects working on each scheme.

## **5. Design Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

The panel see Camden Goods Yard as a very significant development for Camden Town. It is a large and important scheme, and therefore requires a quality of planning, landscape and architecture that responds to the scale of the opportunity. A large amount of work has been carried out since the last design review, resulting in very positive changes. The high quality and level of attention being applied to the scheme is clear, and the emerging designs promise to create a development with distinctive character. The panel is now broadly supportive of overall building heights, whilst suggesting some adjustments to specific buildings. The Petrol Filling Station site, Block B and Block F are progressing very well. Blocks D and E2, both residential terraces, were not reviewed in detail by the panel because it was comfortable with the proposed design approach.

The most significant issues that remain to be addressed relate to masterplanning, to landscaping and green space, and to Blocks C and E1. Block C requires remodelling to ensure its scale does not dominate public spaces to the north, including reducing the height of the northern tower and raising the height of the southern tower. Block E1 is too tall for its site, threatening to overshadow the most important residential



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public spaces on the site. Its scale should be reduced to mitigate its impact on Southampton Square.

The panel recommends a strategic review of the way that public spaces are designed and used across the site. Further detailed scrutiny is required of the overall landscape and movement across the site.

The street pattern for the site is crucial to its success, and should connect it as far as possible with surrounding areas. The importance was emphasised of the main route through the site, from Oval Road to the east of Block B. This needs to be treated as a main street, with pinch points removed, public space increased, and uses designed to activate street frontage. It should be distinguished from routes through the residential parts of the development, to avoid night-time crowds being drawn into housing areas.

A number of points were also made about the liveability of the development, stressing the need for sufficient green space, amenities and play space for the families living there, and whether the more isolated, western routes will feel safe late at night.

Further detail is provided below.

## 6. Development masterplan

### Panel views

#### *Massing and development density*

- Shoulder heights have improved since the last review, but the development is still very dense, and Blocks C and E1 relate poorly to their immediate surroundings. The panel recommended that the heights of Blocks C and E1 should be reconsidered, and that this may require a recalculation of heights across the whole development. The panel's views on these blocks are expanded below (sections 10 and 11).
- The panel asked that Piercy & Co.'s approved Camden Lock scheme should be included in future models and views, as it is highly relevant to views of the Goods Yard buildings.

#### *Street pattern and permeability*

- Whilst broadly supporting the way in which the street pattern has developed, the panel felt that it tends to act more as a series of precincts than a part of the surrounding town. This is caused by the lack of linear views, with most streets terminated by buildings within the development. The panel would encourage more visual connections beyond the site boundaries.
- Because Camden Lock and Stables Markets are so crowded, it is important to think through the consequences of the site being colonised by crowds. The effects could be positive, creating a vibrant place, but potential conflicts with a new residential neighbourhood need to be addressed.



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- As the site has very limited access, connected streets will be critical to allow its street pattern to evolve in future. The only way to normalise connections will be to link to surrounding development when possible, so the site edges need to be knitted into the surrounding street network as far as possible.
- The development will create a new desire line route through the site, between Oval Road and the site exit to Chalk Farm Road, which is likely to be well used. However, it would need to navigate around the proposed Block B. The masterplan creates two routes around either side of Block B, neither of which are direct routes across the site. The masterplan assumes that the western route will be the most used, whereas the eastern route is the more direct. The panel believes that more work needs to be done to resolve this apparent contradiction.
- The Interchange Square route along the eastern railway embankment beside the Stables Market is constrained by the form of Block C, but is likely to be used by large numbers of people, as it provides a new route from the market towards Chalk Farm Underground Station. The panel would encourage adjustment in the form of Block C to maximise the generosity of this route.

## *Vehicle traffic and activity*

- The car-free streets at the south-west side of the site, backed by the railway line, could lack activity, and because of this there is a risk they may not feel safe, especially at night.
- The panel think some on-street parking could be beneficial to the character of these streets, and suggested that car club or visitor spaces, or a small amount of parking linked to workspace accommodation should be considered.
- Other means of bringing life and activity to the south-west section of the site should also be considered, to create the sense of a welcoming residential neighbourhood. This may require more focus on this side of the site, for example in the form of another square.
- Initially the scheme will create a number of cul-de-sacs with little traffic, meaning it may not feel safe late at night. While plans to connect these routes outside the site by redeveloping Gilbey's Yard and Juniper Crescent may resolve this in the long-term, the panel would like to see ways to bring city life to this side of the site explored.
- The panel questioned whether the supermarket entrance needs to be located so far into the site, drawing in traffic, or whether other options existed.



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## *Public spaces and amenity*

- Concerns were expressed about whether the amount of green space included in the scheme is the right level for Camden. The industrial character of the site suggests hard landscape, creating a 'gritty' character - but the residential use means this should be balanced with sufficient green space for residents.
- There should be more focus on distinguishing the public spaces from each other, and the panel think there would be an argument for creating some shared private space. Southampton Square is the main residential public space, it could be fenced like a traditional London estate square, to manage permeability and allow residential use, or hedges could be used to divide the space among users.
- It is important to ensure the scheme achieves both the Mayor's and Camden's targets for residential play space and for amenity space. The panel asked for confirmation of the proposed quantity of provision in relation to these targets.
- The landscape design needs to do more to provide 'defensible space' outside front doors, to improve the environment for residents.
- Goods Yard Place is intended as a civic space, but the possibility of including some play space on lower level for shopping families should be explored. The whole space could include more amenities, rather than just 'buffering' the supermarket.
- Skateboarders should be taken into account, and embraced rather than excluded, with play space needs considered for older children.
- If Maker's Yard is to be a working space, with vehicle access, fixed furniture should be avoided to keep it as useable as possible. The space should be simple and flexible.
- However, with no doorstep play provision on the site, Maker's Yard could alternatively be designed as a residential space, with an entrance function and provision of play space.

## *Sustainability*

- Wind studies, and more sun studies need to be carried out to inform the design of buildings and spaces across the whole site.
- More information is needed on how the development will become zero carbon by 2030. This will require a study into reducing waste and demand, generating energy on site, sharing and balancing energy needs between uses.



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- The panel would expect to see roofs occupied by solar generation, and more differentiation provided between north and south orientations of building facades. A full energy balance should be submitted as part of the planning application.

## 7. Petrol Filling Station site (Niall McLaughlin Architects)

### Panel views

#### *Architecture*

- The panel complemented the architects on a beautiful design, which they felt would improve the quality of the built environment on Chalk Farm Road. The building would work well as an entrance for the site. The current architects will need to be retained to ensure the detail is delivered.
- While appreciating the historic reference to the sooty Great Wall of Camden, the panel questioned whether referencing this by using dark black brick was necessary, as the remaining stretches of wall have been cleaned and now look entirely different.
- The height of the winter garden was questioned, the panel suggesting that it could work equally well if it were lower, and more in scale with the surrounding buildings. The architects were asked to consider how the top level of the winter garden can be maintained to ensure it remains pristine.

#### *Public space*

- They felt that the pocket park proposed to the north-east would not be ideal for public use because of its blank wall and levels of passing traffic, and should be given further thought.
- The public realm should be fully integrated with edges of building at every point. This should include exploring whether the building could actively supervise the space, for example by including a café and / or entrance at the north-east end.
- They also suggested that including public toilets in the form of a retractable urinal and a toilet pod on park site would not be ideal, and that active management would be crucial to maintaining the quality of the space
- Ensuring the public realm works together with the building will be fundamental to the success of the site. While Camden is keen to encourage pedestrians to walk along the opposite side of Chalk Farm Road, conflict between cars accessing the filling station and pedestrians is likely with a narrow pavement.



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- The scheme should be as generous as possible with pavement provision, and cut the building back further at ground level on the south-east corner to improve circulation.

## *Signage*

- As the building will house a petrol station, thought should be given to where the signage and branding will go. The signs that will undoubtedly be needed should be designed into the building, and could be created for the purpose, via branding on the brickwork or behind screen.
- It was also suggested that the ground floor shops, being recessed, may require more opportunity to advertise, and that their signage could also be purpose designed in keeping with the character of the Lock and Stables Markets.

## **8. Block B (Allies and Morrison)**

### **Planning authority's views**

Camden requires this building, as the centre block of the development, to be distinctive and of particularly high design quality. Officers have required the block to meet four key requirements:

1. to play a signature role as the front door to the site
2. to successfully negotiate the 6m level change from front to back
3. to provide high quality amenity on all four sides
4. to give character and activation to all four spaces it fronts.

Camden officers think further work is needed to ensure that Block B responds successfully to all these requirements. The panel's views on this were requested to inform continuing design development.

### **Panel views**

#### *Architecture*

- The panel felt the block's robust, architectural expression is appropriate to a large building with a central role on the site. They broadly support the proposals, but made a number of comments on details which need to be resolved.
- The calm, south elevation works well, but the morphing of style between façades was felt to be less successful.





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- The eastern elevation is more significant as a frontage than is currently acknowledged. The design should respond to the inflection of the building, by bringing the northern frontage round to the side, and thinking about how to use the north-eastern corner. This could include taking the first floor level arches around the corner.
- The proportions of the glazed openings on the east elevation were questioned: they are the largest openings in the building, but occupied by the shallowest spaces.
- There is a lack of clarity about the role of the west elevation at ground level, reflecting uncertainty about the intended character and purpose of the street to the west. Open street level frontage could be wrapped around this corner of the building too, to relate the building better to the street.
- The relationship between storeys on the north elevation needs further work. The brick 'piers' do not hold anything up, so feel unresolved. A brickwork resolution may be required, rather than concrete coping.
- The panel debated the success of the north elevation arches. It was suggested that, as an historical reference to a different function, they result in an overly complicated façade, and that the separate arches at first floor level contribute to the problem. By comparison, the Interchange Building, a nearby influence, has a more integrated façade design. It was suggested that double height central arches could create a new centre to the façade, and provide more depth. There may also be potential to step out the lower level, to reflect the raised podium, which would also provide more room for the shallow work units on the east side of the building.
- The function of the arches was also discussed, the panel suggesting that setting back retail uses behind the frontage means they will have less potential to influence the way the space in front is used. It would be important to draw business out beyond the building to animate the public space, for example with a florist or café.
- The arch design should also take account of the need to manage pigeons, pre-empting the need for pigeon spikes which would compromise the design.

## *Street pattern and permeability*

- The orientation of the masterplan means that the desire line for pedestrians crossing the site from north to south runs to east of Block B. As the core of scheme, Block B is an immovable object around which everything flows. Its strategic situation is therefore very important to the rest of the development. The panel questioned whether the footprint of the building is acceptable, and suggested that its alignment may need to be adjusted to give sufficient prominence to the main desire line route to the east.



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- Uses need to be located in the block to make the most of the public nature of its edges, primarily to the east but also the west, along desire line routes.

### *Public spaces*

- The panel understands that Block B would provide the ideal site for an urban rooftop farm, because of its size. This has great potential to bring character to the scheme and set it apart, as well as providing important access to greenery.
- The entrance to the farm would encourage public access better if it were from outside, rather than in the courtyard.
- There will be a large amount of pressure on the courtyard and balcony spaces, which could be alleviated by having more useable green space nearby.
- The internal courtyard is an important amenity for residents, and this may suggest reducing the number of office light wells to create more useable space.

### *Block plan*

- The upper floors on the western elevation could be set further back, to create a greater sense of light and space on Roundhouse Way.
- The balconies on the west side have a reasonably good aspect, but could more generous.

### *Roofline and signage*

- The signage for the Morrisons supermarket should be purpose-designed to fit with and enhance the architecture.
- The proposed sky sign is an effective way to highlight the presence of the Goods Yard neighbourhood in views from Chalk Farm Road. However, the panel would also encourage the architects to explore variation in the roof and / or parapet form, to add further interest to the sky line.

## **9. Block A (Piercy & Co.) – residential blocks over workspace**

### **Planning authority's views**

Officers are pleased with the new orientation of the blocks, comfortable with the proposed 12 storey height of the block, which improves the relationship with the Roundhouse in the view from Haverstock Hill. However, they have not yet come to a view on a 14-storey height, and would not support more than 14 storeys.



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## Panel views

### *Form and massing*

- The panel felt that the designs are a significant improvement from the version presented to the last review, and are now very elegant. The juxtaposition of two towers works well in the new orientation. They have confidence that the team can deliver the right solution.
- While the reduction in height has improved townscape views, the panel is still not sure that two buildings of a similar size work next to each other. They suggest a more stepped relationship would work better, depending on any impact on views.
- The panel suggested that Block A is better suited to accepting more floor space provision than other buildings on the site, although anything over 14 storeys would be problematic.
- The panel felt the sculptural expression of columns in a sloped profile was effective, and encouraged the architects to use the technique more to break up flat façades.

### *Block plan*

- The panel felt that more should be done to improve the outlook from the two single aspect studios in the south east tower - for example by introducing projecting bay windows or balconies.
- It would be preferable for bicycle store access to be through the main reception, to help ensure this is easy and pleasant to use.
- Office access would work better through the north east façade, rather than via a hidden lift.
- More thought should be given to how the car park entrance can be successfully incorporated into the building. Its access, which currently crosses the only level access route to the site, could be dangerous for pedestrians.

### *Street pattern and permeability*

- Residential entrances should not, ideally, be aligned towards the main road and the roundabout.
- More drop-off space will be needed to service 112 flats, alongside traffic to the supermarket.



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## *Signage*

- Signage will be required on the north façade for the Morrisons car park entrance, and should be designed in rather than added afterwards.

## **10. Block C (Allies and Morrison) – residential with workspace**

### **Planning authority's views**

Camden officers feel that the new, simplified form of Block C has given it a stronger character, with a more direct face towards Chalk Farm Road, while breaking down the scale of northern elevation. The concave western façade helps to reinforce the route to Southampton Square. However, they have doubts over the relationship between the north east corner and adjacent open space, and are keen to ensure the space around Block C is defined as separate to the Market, with market traffic directed away from residential streets.

### **Panel's views**

#### *Form and massing*

- The panel were supportive of the plans, and felt that the concave face worked in drawing people around the building along the main desire route. However, they recommend a reduction in the height of the taller western building, and refinement of the landscape design.
- In the panel's view the taller, western building is too dominant, overpowering the public space below. It also looks too tall and dominant in views. It would be better if reduced so it is comparable with the height of Block B. However, the lower, eastern tower could be higher, perhaps by a storey. They asked the architects to investigate how heights could be adjusted.
- They suggested that the building footprint could be adjusted to create a more generous green route from Interchange Square parallel to the railway line.
- The panel asked whether reducing the excavation required to construct this block could save costs and require less height.

#### *Public spaces*

- The green space between Block C and the railway line is too constrained and will create a pinch point for traffic from the Stables and Lock Markets. This provides the closest to a neighbourhood park for a wider area that lacks green space. The building should be pulled back from the sewer line that forms the current northern footprint edge to avoid creating squeezing this space. The space could also be made much greener, as long as a clear route is designed across it.



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- It is important that people are not drawn through the residential route to the south west of the site from the Market, and that night-time uses are kept separate from residential areas. The route from the Market through the site needs to be clearly identified and signposted to the north, alongside the Stables Market. This can also be controlled through allocation of uses, with workshops on the south west route rather than bars and restaurants.
- Retail could work better on the north-west corner of building, with the south west corner allocated for community use, providing a lynchpin for the public space on this side and bringing use to it. This would also help to define it as different territory to Camden Lock Market.
- The size of the public space between Blocks C and D could be reduced to manage public access to more residential areas.

## 11. Block E1 (Piercy & Co.) – residential block

### Planning authority's views

Camden wishes to ensure that the scheme does not unnecessarily reduce residential floor space provision at the southern end of the site, while at the same time retaining the relationship between the scale of development and the surrounding townscape. Gilbey's Yard, if redeveloped, will be higher, and the density of development on the south of the Goods Yard site should also encourage development at an appropriate density on Gilbey's Yard.

### Panel's views

#### *Massing and public space*

- The panel felt that, although the quality of the architecture of the block was impressive, it was too high for its location. A tall landmark building did not fit the requirements of a residential square. There is no townscape rationale for its height, and its relationship with the adjoining terraces would be over-dominant.

#### *Public spaces*

- The building would also be too tall for its position on the south-west side of the principle community space for the whole site, Southampton Square, and would be likely to overshadow the square during the afternoon, the most important time for its use.
- More shadow analysis, and wind studies are required, to inform decisions about the appropriate height of Block E1 in relation to Southampton Square.



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## *Street pattern and permeability*

- Because of its position on the corner of the main route across the site, the relationship between the block and surrounding streets will be very important. If Gilbey's Yard is to be redeveloped in future a new street pattern will need to be established around the block to knit the developments together, avoiding dead ends.

## **12. Block F (Allies and Morrison) – residential with workspace**

### **Panel views**

#### *Architecture*

- The panel were impressed with many aspects of the design, including composition of the block as a group of buildings, the sunlit courtyard, brickwork and the robust façade western façade overlooking the railway line.
- Concerns were raised over the connection between plan and elevation. Entering flats intended to look separate through an entrance in the building next door is not ideal from a design perspective. The plan for the building should be fully tested to address disconnections.

#### *Block plan*

- The block contains a large number of single aspect flats. Every effort should be made to increase the number of dual aspect flats, for example by providing additional circulation cores.
- The relationship between the car park ramp and the street to the west of the block should be examined to avoid an unpleasant pedestrian environment, and to allow activation of the ground floor level on this façade.
- The possibility should be examined of using external shutters to deal with overheating on the south-west corner of the building.
- Bicycle storage should be in locations closer to front doors, rather than in a single area that is harder to access.

#### *Public spaces*

- The panel questioned whether Maker's Yard was located on the best side of the site. Its current location is relatively secluded, and might be more appropriate for residential use, with more activity on the north-east side instead.



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- The potential to re-align the south-east edge of the block to respond to the geometry of the southern site boundary should be explored. This could allow Block E2 to be re-aligned, which may allow the height of Block E2 to increase without overshadowing Gilbey's Yard (see comments on reducing the height of Block E1 above).
- The space to the south west of Block F, adjacent to the West Coast Mainline will be a sunny external space – and the landscape design should make the most of this.
- The courtyard will provide circulation space for flats as well as amenity space. Green space for residents is limited, and Roundhouse Way and / or the space along the railway line need to provide more greenery and amenity space to compensate. Other green space options, such as allotments on the west side, should be pursued. The courtyard also needs to provide enough soil depth for trees to flourish.

## Next steps

The panel looks forward to continuing its involvement with the proposals, seeing further amendments to the designs and commenting on the designs at planning application stage.

