

Camden Design Review Panel

Report of Chair's Review Meeting: 48-56 Bayham Place

Friday 4 August 2017
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Kathryn Firth

Attendees

Seonaid Carr	London Borough of Camden
Neil McDonald	London Borough of Camden
Charlie Rose	London Borough of Camden
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Bethany Cullen	London Borough of Camden
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Frances Madders	London Borough of Camden
Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden

Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Camden Council 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.

1. Project name and site address

48 – 56 Bayham Place, London, NW1 0EU

Planning application reference: 2017/2739/P

2. Presenting team

Dean Jordan	DP9
Andries Kruger	Ambigram Architects

3. Planning authority's views

48-56 Bayham Place is a 19th century former industrial building located in a dead end mews street. It is located in Sub Area 1 of the Camden Town Conservation Area to which it is considered to make a positive contribution. This planning application is a revision to a previous consented application, granted in October 2016, for a roof extension. The revised application is for a similar design, but seeks to raise the overall height of the development from five to six storeys.

Since the previous consent was granted, the immediate context of the site has changed, particularly in terms of height. A mansard roof extension is currently under construction at 3, 5 and 7 Bayham Street, and planning permission has been granted for a significant redevelopment of the urban block behind Koko, which includes an additional storey and a setback floor facing Bayham Place.

Camden supports this proposal, and thinks the contemporary interpretation of the top two storeys is an appropriate response to the industrial character of the street. It particularly asked for the panel's comments on mass and height, long views, impact on to the setting of the Grade II listed Koko building, and on the conservation area.

4. Design Review Panel's Views

Summary

There are arguments both for and against the proposed increase in height of development at 48-56 Bayham Place. The balance of these arguments does not allow the panel to give unqualified support for the scheme – but the issues are set out below, to assist Camden officers in reaching their own conclusion. The panel understands the rationale for increasing the height of the consented scheme from five to six storeys. This is based on recent planning approvals for neighbouring sites, and the promise of high quality architecture. However, the panel emphasises the need to ensure that the conservation area is both preserved and enhanced – and raises several concerns in this regard. The height of development may undermine the street hierarchy, because the development will be taller than, and visible above the roofs of houses on Bayham Street, which is the primary street, the mews being secondary. It also suggests that whilst the projecting sculptural roof form may have been accepted in the consented scheme, now that additional height is proposed a less assertive design may be more appropriate.



Any recommendation for approval should include measures to ensure the current architects are retained so that the quality promised in the current drawings is realised at the construction stage. Planning officers should also assure themselves that approving this scheme would not set a precedent for future development of a scale that would damage the character of other mews within the conservation area, and that this development can be seen as a special case with an unusual context.

Height and massing

- The panel understands the rationale for increasing the height of the consented scheme, from five to six storeys. This is based on recent planning approvals for neighbouring sites, including the Koko's site opposite, and an analysis of the unusual character of Bayham Place.
- The height of the proposed development is taller than is proposed on the opposite side of Bayham Place, as part of the consented Koko's scheme, and the panel is concerned that a six storey building on a mews is not consistent with the street hierarchy of the Conservation Area – which would suggest that Bayham Place (the mews) should be lower in scale than Bayham Street (the primary street).
- A clear street hierarchy plays an important role in the character of the Conservation Area. The additional storey of development would be visible above the roofs of houses on Bayham Street, make the mews feel darker and more enclosed, and for these reasons could be perceived as having a detrimental impact on this character.
- For this scheme to be approved it would be necessary to spell out clearly why the special context of Bayham Place would allow a development of this scale which might otherwise set a precedent for future mews developments elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

Architecture

- The cantilevered top storey, while an intriguing element in the consented scheme, may be less appropriate if it is raised by an additional storey.
- The panel suggests that if a six storey development continues to be proposed, a less assertive design would be more appropriate.
- For example, stepping back the roof volume, in the style of a contemporary mansard, could have a less overbearing effect on the mews.

Materiality

- The panel supports the use of contemporary building materials for the roof extension. However, it expresses concern that some of the precedent images show cladding materials that are not consistent with the light appearance of the room in the visualisations.



- It asked for clarity about the materials suggested, and visualisations to give as realistic as possible an impression of their appearance.
- The quality of the design is particularly important, given the sensitivity of the site and the challenging scale of development proposed.
- If the scheme is recommended for approval, it will be crucial that the current architects are retained and that the designs are delivered at the proposed level of quality. The panel would support the use of planning conditions to achieve this.

Next steps

The panel is unable to give unqualified support for this proposal, but recognises that the unique local context and the high quality of design proposed provide arguments in its favour. A less assertive top storey may mitigate the impact of the scheme whilst retaining the principle of a six-storey development. The panel is confident that the design team can respond to the comments above in consultation with planning officers, but would be happy to review the scheme again if requested to do so.

