



Camden Design Review Panel

Report of Chair's Review Meeting: 18-22 Haverstock Hill

Friday 2 March 2018
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Kay Hughes

Attendees

David Fowler	London Borough of Camden
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Bethany Cullen	London Borough of Camden
Frances Madders	London Borough of Camden
Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

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.

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1. Project name and site address

18-22 Haverstock Hill, London, NW3 2BL

2. Presenting team

Jonathan Caplan	PPR Estates
David Cawston	Piercy & Company
Lara Patrizi	Piercy & Company
Richard Abbott	Stace
Mia Scaggiante	Savills

3. Planning authority's views

The proposed development replaces three Georgian/early Victorian buildings at the northern end of the Camden Town Centre area with a single building containing 29 residential units and ground floor retail units. The site is not covered by any designations, but is located on a prominent junction close to the Grade II listed Chalk Farm Underground Station and Grade II* listed Roundhouse. Camden asked for the panel's views on quality of the proposals including their scale, their contribution to the high street and the residential accommodation provided.

4. Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel is unable to support the designs as currently proposed. The bulk and form of the development are appropriate, and would create an effective frontage on Chalk Farm Road. However, the quality of the residential accommodation requires significant improvement. The interior layout is compromised by the proposed site coverage, creating a number of problems which will have an unacceptable cumulative impact on the liveability of the scheme. It is likely that the number of apartments proposed for the site will need to be reduced in order to address issues, including sub-standard basement-level amenity spaces and poorly lit flats on several floors. Issues such as refuse management and bicycle storage should be rethought to ensure the building functions as intended. It suggests some amendments to the façade design to ensure materials are an appropriate colour for a busy main road site, that the corner expression is developed further, and that the building more directly reflects the character of the shops along Chalk Farm Road. The panel would regret the loss of the mature cherry tree on the adjoining Council-owned site, which would appear to be the inevitable consequence of the current proposals.

Architectural expression

- The bulk and form of the proposed building is appropriate for a junction site which would benefit from a more distinctive and prominent building.
- The majority of buildings on Chalk Farm Road are characterised by separate top and bottom sections, but this building is designed as a single object with



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one façade material. The panel suggests the architects look further at whether their designs can do more to reflect the character and distinctiveness of their surroundings.

- The façade should be designed to accommodate the shop signs that will be needed once the ground floor retail units are occupied. These should be designed into the building from the start, and may also help to introduce exuberance into the architecture and reflect the Chalk Farm Road surroundings more directly.
- The use of white façade tiles is problematic for a site next to a busy road. They are likely to become dirty very quickly, particularly on the prominent west-facing elevation. A darker material that can be washed down, such as faience, may be a better choice.
- The architecture of the distinctive west corner, facing towards Haverstock Hill, needs further developed to create the strong feature envisaged. A different material might help to enliven the corner, while lengthening windows could also strengthen the design.

Site coverage

- The panel is concerned that the current designs propose excessive site coverage. The decision to push development to the boundaries of the site on a deep plot while also adding storeys, has stretched the site beyond its capacity. This has resulted in the quality of accommodation being undermined by the number of units proposed.
- The site coverage has created basement garden spaces which are both too dark and too small. In particular, the north-west basement garden will be one-and-a-half storeys below ground, and too small and dark for a flat designed for family use. Pressure on spaces at the rear of the development should be reduced, and the basement may need to be made smaller to avoid spaces that are too deep in the slope at the back of the site.

Internal layout

- The plans include long basement corridors, which are likely to be dark. These should be reduced in length to create more pleasant spaces.
- The single-aspect, north-facing basement accommodation is of particularly poor quality and should be reorientated.

Bicycle storage in the basement, accessible only via the single shared lift, is awkward and residents will be much less likely to use it. This should be relocated to the ground level.



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- The ground floor entrance should be wider and more generous, creating a lobby with a sense of arrival, as well as room for delivery space and letter boxes.
- The south-east corner units above the main entrance on Levels One, Two and Three will only be lit from the front by a small window. This is not sufficient, and such deep spaces will require more window space.
- The recessed façade area next to the main entrance also includes windows on Levels One, Two and Three which are very small in relation to the rooms they serve.
- The southern section of the central corridor on Levels One, Two and Three would provide more useable space if it was included within the unit to the east, rather than as part of the corridor.
- The location of the rubbish bins in the basement is likely to cause problems, as they will have to be taken up in the single lift and through the lobby, which will undermine the quality of the space. Further thought should be given to how rubbish can be managed differently.
- A single lift may not be sufficient to serve a building of this size. Although accessible flats are located on the ground floor, it is not only people with acknowledged access needs who will be inconvenienced when the lift is out of service, particularly if it is required for bicycle storage and rubbish collection.
- The amenity space at roof level is likely to require communal storage for items used in the space, such as chairs.

Relationship to neighbours

- The panel notes that the blank west façade facing the vacant, council-owned site between the development and Haverstock Hill School has been introduced in case the school expands. However, as this is not thought to be likely, the restrictions placed on development at 18-22 Haverstock Hill seem unnecessary. The panel suggests that the possibility of the vacant adjoining site being included in the development should be fully explored.
- The mature cherry tree on the vacant site is an asset, and the applicants should fully explore options for retaining it.
- The building is set back from the neighbouring Salvation Army building on the east side of the site. However, the balconies that project towards the building may still restrict its future development and it may be preferable to locate them on the east side of the building instead.



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Landscaping

- The landscaping proposed for outside spaces will require long-term management. A provision should be included in the lease to ensure it is maintained properly.
- The design team needs to ensure that the trees at the front of the building have sufficient canopy space to thrive.

Next steps

- The panel would welcome further opportunities to comment on the proposals once its comments have been addressed.

