



Camden Design Review Panel

Report of Formal Review of Stephenson Way (land at rear of 210 Euston Road)

Friday 10 November 2017
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Richard Lavington
David Kohn
Barbara Kaucky
Sara Grohmann

Attendees

Neil McDonald	London Borough of Camden
Victoria Hinton	London Borough of Camden
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Sarah Carmona	Frame Projects
Farzana Yasmin	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Bethany Cullen	London Borough of Camden
Rachel English	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

Stephenson Way Student Residential
Land to the rear of 210 Euston Road, adjacent to 222 Euston Road, fronting
Stephenson Way, London, NW1 2DA

2. Presenting team

James Buckley	TP Bennett
Peter Davis	TP Bennett
Vinay Mahtani	Churchgate

3. Planning authority's views

The site is currently vacant and provides vehicular access to number 210 Euston Road via an existing ramp, with six car parking spaces. To the west is a hotel and to the south and east are office buildings. On the opposite side of Stephenson Way is an office block. The rear of a student residential block at Bentley House is located on Stephenson Way. There are also two locally listed buildings on the opposite side of Stephenson Way, which are late Victorian-era warehouse and manufacturing buildings.

The site has no specific land use designations. It is not located within a conservation area. Stephenson Way is highlighted in the Euston Area Planning Brief as being in a public realm wider zone of influence. The site is also located in the Euston Growth Area. Officers anticipate significant change to the area in coming years, as Euston Station will be re-aligned to accommodate HS2, which will bring the station building much closer to the site and may result in a significant increase in footfall along Stephenson Way. Pre-application advice has been issued, concerning scale and bulk, detailed design, and storey heights (ground floor, parapet level and top two setback storeys). Officers welcome the panel's views on these aspects.

4. Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The Design Review Panel feels that the development presents a good opportunity to fill an unsightly gap in the street frontage in Stephenson Way. The current proposals provide an appropriate scale to the frontage to Stephenson Way and have a simple architectural expression that could be successful, so long as high quality materials and detailing are employed. However, the panel has significant concerns about the impact of the scheme on the building to the rear (210 Euston Road). Any redevelopment of the Stevenson Way site should allow for the future redevelopment of the Euston Road site, and the current plan, with single aspect rooms close to the rear site boundary, would severely restrict the future development potential of the adjoining site. In addition, the panel raises concerns about the quality of accommodation internally, and feels that there is significant scope for improvement and generosity within both the individual rooms and the communal spaces. Further details on the panel's views are provided below.



Massing and development density

- The panel considers that the scale of the frontage of the proposals on Stephenson Way seems appropriate, and sits well with the adjacent buildings to the east and west.
- However, the proposed building would sit close to the rear site boundary to 210 Euston Road to the south, and the panel considers that the single aspect student bedrooms proposed at the rear of the new building would significantly constrain any future redevelopment of this key site on Euston Road.
- The panel would welcome analysis of rights to light, to explore basic issues around the habitability of the building, in addition to the potential constraints on future development of 210 Euston Road.
- This analysis should demonstrate how the proposed scheme would work when set in the context of potential future development scenarios for 210 Euston Road.

Quality of accommodation

- The panel feels that there is scope for significant improvement in the quality and configuration of the accommodation proposed.
- It notes that bin and bike storage is located at the ground floor of the development, which offers limited scope to activate the street. In contrast, the communal lounge space is located in the basement.
- The panel would encourage relocation of the communal lounge so that it can benefit from daylight and views of the quiet mews street, as well as activating the street frontage. Bin and bike storage could be located at basement level, and accessed via the ramp that accesses the rear of the building.
- The student accommodation is planned in clusters of student rooms that share kitchen facilities. The panel notes that there is a lack of generosity both in the planning of the individual rooms themselves, and the shared spaces.
- Provision of three bed units with more generous communal area would seem a better model than the 'twodios', which present a number of problems due to the limited space available.
- For example, preparing food in the shared kitchen area could significantly disturb the occupant of the adjoining room, as the cooker and sink are located immediately next to the bed in the adjoining rooms.
- Currently, the kitchen areas feel like wide corridors. The panel question whether it would be possible to share meals or have guests to dinner, as there does not seem adequate space for this.



- The panel also thinks the design of the studio rooms could be improved. Currently they are deep in plan, with low ceiling heights and a single aspect, orientated to either the north or the south, and no daylight in the kitchen areas.
- The panel would encourage the design team to explore alternative configurations for the accommodation. Clustering rooms around more generous shared kitchens could create more generous living spaces, and a greater sense of community.
- Similarly, the panel think providing windows in the corridors would substantially improve the quality of these shared spaces.

Architectural expression

- In terms of architecture current proposals represent a respectful architectural response to the local context of Stephenson Way.
- Whilst there is perhaps a missed opportunity to explore a more imaginative architecture, the panel feels that if high quality materials and detailing are employed, then the scheme would be a calm insertion into an interesting and handsome street.
- In elevation, there is an opportunity to express the location of the stairs in the treatment of the façade.
- In addition, the panel would support a more generous storey height at ground level.
- Clarity on the nature of the uppermost section of the building would also be welcomed, including the materials to be used.

Appropriateness and adaptability

- The panel considers that the brief for the development is very challenging; the scheme appears to be driven more by the site's constraints rather than its opportunities.
- The panel questions whether alternative uses have been considered for the site, given its highly accessible location close to Euston Station, soon to be redeveloped for HS2.
- Student accommodation is not very flexible or adaptable for alternative future uses that may respond better to the changing nature of the area.
- Further exploration of how the development of this site could anticipate future change within the immediate area would be welcomed.



Next Steps

- The panel would welcome a further opportunity to review the proposals. They highlight a number of action points for consideration by the design team, in consultation with Camden officers.

