



Nick Baxter
Senior Planner (Conservation)
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall
Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

Sent by email: nick.baxter@camden.gov.uk

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Our ref: 96 07 33

Dear Nick Baxter,

2018/2975/L Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1AE

The Twentieth Century Society has been notified of the above application. The application seeks retrospective listed building consent for the painting of a section of the southern end wall (Bernard Street), and further LBC for the painting of the remainder of the southern end wall, the return edge of the southern end wall from the first to the fourth floor, and the northern end wall (Handel Street). The Society wishes to **object** to the above application. This application was considered by the Society's Casework Advisory Committee at their August meeting of this year, and the comments set out below are representative of members' views.

In April 2018 the Society was alerted to painting of the southern end wall of the Brunswick Centre, which had been done without listed building consent. Listed building consent is required to assess the impact of alterations on the external appearance of the Grade II listed building. A representative of the Society met with residents and members of the owners' team, Lazari Investment Limited, to discuss the paintwork. We wrote to Lazari Investment Limited, advising that an LBC application must be submitted and a greater level of scrutiny be carried out as regards the specification of the paint.

The Brunswick Centre was designed in several phases during the 1960s, with Patrick Hodgkinson as the main architect. The mixed scheme was built between 1967 and 1972, and listed at Grade II in 2000. David Levitt was a member of the Patrick Hodgkinson's team, and was the lead architect for refurbishment works to the Brunswick Centre in 2005-6. Patrick Hodgkinson was also consulted as part of the 2005-6 refurbishment. Painting of some areas was undertaken as part of this refurbishment, and a clear strategy was devised for which areas were to be painted, and which paint was to be used. This strategy is described in Design and Access statement:

The logic for this [strategy to paint some areas cream and leave other areas with the appearance of being unpainted] was to leave the supporting structure as a 'cradle' in which the two painted housing blocks would be held – thus the main columns at Brunswick Square, for instance, and the two end walls would remain as concrete.

The Society considers the decisions made by the 2005-6 refurbishment team should be followed in further works, and the above application directly conflicts with this expert advice.

It is also concerning that the application does not address the maintenance and repair of the concrete structure as we recommended earlier this year. Structural aspects of the 2005-6 renovations were carried out by engineering firm Buro Happold, who thoroughly dealt with areas of spalling, and specified SIKA coloured coating as appropriate for application to exposed concrete. The current application applicants fails to supply information regarding the exact specification of the paint to be used, so it is not known whether this contains properties appropriate for the preservation of concrete. The areas that were not painted in 2005-6 were treated with 'Keim Concretal Lasur' diluted mineral silicate paint, which stained the concrete to equalise colour variations and blemishes, retaining an exposed finish. This treatment has incorrectly been identified as 'grey paint' in the applicant's proposed elevations.

The Society notes that the applicant references the concrete maintenance and repair strategy devised for the 2005-6 application, but is choosing to deviate from this expert advice. The concrete repair works carried out in 2005-6 were thorough, but in the intervening decade new areas of spalling have emerged, and these require expert attention. We recommend that the advice prepared in 2005-6 be followed and further developed into a long-term concrete maintenance and repair plan.

The exposed concrete finish is a clear demonstration of the building's form as 'the pioneering example of a megastructure in England', and the original material uniformity supports the idea of a combination of 'several functions of equal importance within a single framework' (Brunswick Centre list description: [1246230](#)). Historic England's list description also discusses the importance of the redrafting of the residential scheme by the London Borough of Camden Architects Department in 1965, who adapted it to meet the requirements for social housing. The influence of the Brunswick Centre on later projects by the LB Camden Architects Department is clear, visible in shared characteristics including monumentality and material honesty. The Society considers this evolution of the design to be an important aspect of the building's historic interest, and should not be considered as a detractor from the scheme's significance, as is suggested by the applicant. We are therefore of the view that further painting of the exposed concrete would have a negative impact on the building's architectural and historic significance.

The Society therefore objects to the above application, and urges the London Borough of Camden to recommend that the applicant reconsiders their approach. I trust that you will be able to take our concerns and the concerns of residents into account.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Grace Etherington

Caseworker

Twentieth Century Society

Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in *ODPM Circular 09/2005*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.