
55 Fitzroy Park
The Turner Stokes Family
& The Springer Family

DRP Feedback &
Responses Summary
August 2018

Piercy & Company

The Centro Building
39 Plender Street
London NW1 0DT

info@piercyandco.com
www.piercyandco.com

Telephone
+44 (0)20 74249611

1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared to summarise the design responses to feedback received from the two Design Review Panels for the proposed development at 55 Fitzroy Park.

The document is to be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement for the proposal.

Design Review Panel 01 was held on 2nd March 2018 with Catherine Burd [Chair] and Richard Lavington.

Design Review Panel 02 was held on 11th May 2018 with Peter Studdert [Chair] and Richard Lavington.

In the following pages, the feedback received from the panel at each meeting is quoted, with the design team responses following each point, detailed in red.

It is felt that all concerns raised by the Design Review Panel have been addressed - as reflected in the commentary in this document and the design evolution noted in parts of sections 4-7 of the DAS.

It should be noted that the proposed architectural language of all 5 plots is supported by the Design Review Panel.

The key members of the design team are detailed adjacent.



Masterplan,
Landscape &
Ecology

LUC
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD

Piercy & Company

Architect
Plots 1-3 & 5

Piercy & Company
The Centro Building
39 Plender Street
London NW1 0DT



Architect
Plot 4

Fathom Architects
60a Weston Street
London SE1 3QJ

SMPlanning

Planning Consultant

SM Planning
80-83 Long Lane
London EC1A 9ET

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL'S VIEWS DRP 01 - 02.03.18
DESIGN TEAM RESPONSES IN RED

SUMMARY

The panel would not be able to support the development proposals for 55 Fitzroy Park in their current form, and recommends further thought about the site layout, landscape, and architecture of the scheme. Whilst the principle of redeveloping the site to provide additional family homes is accepted, the panel does not think a convincing case has been made for the construction of five homes. The way these are arranged on the site, with an access road alongside the existing pond, would have a damaging impact on the landscape quality of the site. The panel also questions the decision to design each of the homes with a different architectural language. In particular, the three houses fronting Fitzroy Park, in contrasting styles, would create a disjointed effect on the street. Existing houses along this road are generally widely spaced, and the landscape with mature trees in between creates a sense of coherence, despite their varied character. This would not be the case for the proposed development, where the houses are shown close together. Of the five houses, the panel thinks the architectural quality of those designed by Piercy and Company, and by Fathom Architects show promise. It is less convinced by the three houses designed by 21st Architecture, which appear to lack the quality that this exceptional site deserves. These comments are expanded below.

MASSING AND DEVELOPMENT DENSITY

- On the basis of the information presented, the panel is not convinced the site can accommodate five houses.

Noted.

- Analysis of plot ratios has been carried out to make a case for the proposed amount of development. However, the panel notes that the area is characterised by plots with lower density development close to the heath, and denser plots further away.

Noted. The proposed plot ratios for 55 Fitzroy Park are between 10.9% and 18.5% - which is within the lowest 9 of 21 plots, when compared with neighbouring sites. This conforms to the characterisation of lower density plots in close proximity to the Heath. See section 3.2 of the DAS for further details.

- A development with four houses could avoid the need for an access road through the site, and allow for more of the distinctive landscape quality of the site to be maintained.

The landscape design has been revised to remove the access road through the site to be replaced with a smaller pedestrian lane. It is therefore felt that 5 houses is appropriate - as reflected in the plot ratio comparison studies mentioned earlier.

See section 4.4 of the DAS for further details.

SCHEME LAYOUT

- The panel thinks that bringing cars onto the site, with an access road hard up against the pond will destroy the landscape character which makes it so special. For this reason, it questions the appropriateness of building five homes.

The landscape design has been revised to remove the access road through the site to be replaced with a smaller pedestrian lane. See section 4.4 of the DAS for further details.

- Further thought about the feasibility of using Millfield Lane to provide access to one dwelling on this side of the site, avoiding the need for a new roadway through the site, would be encouraged.

Vehicular access from Millfield Lane would not be appropriate. The landscape design has been revised to remove the access road through the site.

- The panel thinks the house on Plot 5 is too close to the pond.

The building form and position has been adjusted to shift it further away from the pond.

See section 7.3.1 (positioning & massing - DRP 02) for further details.

- Given that three of the houses are intended for occupation by one extended family, it is a shame that separate gardens are proposed. A shared garden would maintain a more open landscape character with fewer fences or boundaries.

The landscape design has been revised for plots 1-3 to address these concerns, with an open area that makes the most of the retained orchard trees and links through to the pond.

2.0 Design Review Panel 01

ARCHITECTURE

- The panel thinks that architecture of exceptional quality will be needed to support the case for a development resulting in the loss of protected open space.

Noted.

- Designs by Piercy and Company for Plot 5, and by Fathom Architecture for Plot 4 promise to meet this test, but the panel does not think that the three houses fronting Fitzroy Park by 21st Architecture are of sufficient quality.

Noted. Following DRP 01 Piercy&Company replaced 21st Architecture as the architects for plots 1-3. The revised designs produced by Piercy&Co for plots 1-3 were supported by the panel at DRP 02, described as 'high quality architecture'.

See section 5.5 of the DAS for further information.

- The designs for Plots 1, 2, and 3 in contrasting styles would create a disjointed effect on the road. Because these are close together, the panel thinks designing them as variations on a theme would work better.

The revised designs produced by Piercy&Co for plots 1-3 reflect these concerns - and have been designed as a 'family of objects'. The revised designs produced by Piercy&Co for plots 1-3 were supported by the panel at DRP 02.

See section 5.5 of the DAS for further information.

- These houses also appear to lack architectural integrity and rigour. For example the 1930s style of Plot 2 suggests the use of Crittal type windows with narrow mullions – however these are no longer available, because they do not meet Building Regulations. The flat roofs shown in views of Plot 1 appear awkward with the Arts and Crafts style proposed.

The revised designs produced by Piercy&Co for plots 1-3 were supported by the panel at DRP 02.

- The designs for both Plot 4 and 5 respond more successfully to the topography and character of the site – although the proposal for a house at Plot 5 is not supported, and should be reconsidered.

Noted. It seems that a major reason for not supporting plot 5 is the access road through the site - this has been removed as part of the landscape redesign. See section 4.4 of the DAS for further details. The size and positioning of plot 5 has also been revised to reduce its impact on the pond.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- Allowing more space between the new homes and the pond would allow for a softer, more natural edge, to this ecologically valuable feature of the site.

The revised landscape design provides a significantly improved setting for the pond. By reducing the size of plot 5 and locating it further from the pond there is more space for a natural edge and marginal planting. See section 4.3 of the DAS for further detail.

- The retaining wall that divides the site into two compromises the landscape character of the site and the established relationship between the orchard and pond.

By removing the access road from the design there is now sufficient space for a natural treatment between the orchard and the pond. The pedestrian path passes through a wildflower meadow with a bank down to the pond.

- The site has the character of a piece of countryside in London – and the panel would encourage the architects to develop a landscape approach that can help guide decisions about site layout and architecture.

The design of the site has been landscape and ecology led, with surveys identifying the most valuable habitats and trees. The landscape strategies have been defined to ensure that the openness, rural character, habitat connectivity and ecological value are enhanced by this proposal.

NEXT STEPS

The panel would welcome a further opportunity to comment on the proposed development of 55 Fitzroy Park before planning submission.

Agreed - Design Review Panel 02 was held of 11th May 2018.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL'S VIEWS DRP 02 - 11.05.18
DESIGN TEAM RESPONSES IN RED

SUMMARY

The panel feels that the proposals have improved significantly since the previous review, but that further refinements are needed to make a successful case for the construction of five houses on the site. The development should reduce and mitigate its impact on the landscape value and character of the site, which is a vestige of an open, less developed landscape. The panel supports the proposals for Plots 1, 2 and 3, which promise high quality architecture on the street frontage. The panel is less convinced by the houses on Plots 4 and 5, because of the way they compromise the landscape quality of the site. The panel made some suggestions about the way in which the impact of these houses could be mitigated. The panel asks that the setting of the pond is protected by moving the Plot 5 house further away, which is likely to require a reduced footprint. Over-engineering of the landscape should be avoided: the edges of the pond should be less steep, the fence along the access route reduced, and fences and hedges removed where possible to avoid breaking up the space. The proposed platform lift is also an inappropriately urban intervention. Further landscape enrichment could also help make the case for the development, for example by demonstrating improvements in biodiversity. These comments are expanded below.

SCALE AND MASSING

- On the basis of the information presented, the panel is not convinced the site can accommodate five houses.

Noted. It is felt that the issues raised during DRP 02 have been addressed, and are detailed in the following text.

It is therefore felt that 5 houses are appropriate for the site.

- The proposal presented at the previous review did not convince the panel that five houses could be built on the site without an excessive impact on the character and landscape of the site. The panel still has reservations about the number of dwellings, and feels more needs to be done to reduce their impact.

Noted. It is felt that the issues raised during DRP 02 have been addressed, and are detailed in the following text.

It is therefore felt that 5 houses are appropriate for the site.

- The pond is a unique feature of the site, not found in neighbouring gardens, and more should be done to avoid crowding it, and retaining a sense of openness with better landscape connections. The house proposed for Plot 5 is still too large and overbearing in relation to the pond. The footprint of the house could be reduced, and its height increased if it has no impact on views from Hampstead Heath.

The building massing and position for plot 5 have been revised again following these comments - leading to an overall area reduction of 16%. The building is now positioned 4.1m from the pond at its closest point - it was previously 2.5m. It is felt that significant measures have been taken to address this concern.

See section 7.3 of the DAS for further information.

- A smaller footprint for a house on Plot 5 would also allow more space for the landscape to flow around the building, retaining more of a sense of openness.

It is felt that this point has been addressed - with the building area reduced by 16% - see above.

SCHEME LAYOUT

- The removal of vehicular access from the route around the pond is a great improvement. However, the panel still thinks that reprofiling of the landscape around the pond, and the proposed fence create too much of a sense of enclosure.

Further changes have since been made to the design to reduce the requirement of a handrail and create an open space between the pond and the orchard. The grass path around the pond, marginal planting and planted bank maintain the natural setting of the pond while also improving access and openness.

3.0 Design Review Panel 02

- The inclusion of a platform lift to provide access to Plots 4 and 5 feels too urban an intervention for a semi-rural setting. The panel suggests another solution is found, such as locating the lift within one of the houses.

A platform lift is required - as the difference in levels cannot be resolved through the use of ramps. It is felt that a shared, external platform lift is an appropriate solution to the issue - and it has been designed to be subtly incorporated into the brick retaining wall and steps to plot 5.

- As Plots 1-3 are being designed for one family, more shared garden space could be introduced. This would create more of a connection between the houses, and would also keep the landscape more open, reducing barriers across the site.

The landscape design has been revised for plots 1-3 to address these concerns. See section 4.4 of the DAS for further information.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- In general, the panel feels the landscape should be designed to remain as open as possible. This could be achieved by reducing the extent of fences and hedges, to avoid dividing up the site. The size of the fence along the edge of the pond should be reduced as far as possible, to maintain the feeling of openness, characteristic of the site.

The landscape design has been reworked to increase the amount of open space, for example between the orchard and pond and also into the site from Fitzroy Park. This is detailed in section 4.2 of the DAS. Fences have also been removed where no longer required by the improved design.

- The panel suggests that the landscape around the pond should remain as close to its original profile as possible. Steeper banks should be avoided, as this will increase the sense of enclosure around the pond.

The proposals have been adjusted to maintain the original profile where possible. The removal of the access road and reduction and relocation of plot 5 have allowed for improvements to the treatment of the pond edge which is described in section 4.3 of the DAS.

- The pond currently drains around the edge of the tennis court onto Hampstead Heath. The drainage route could influence the landscape design, and options such as a wet garden should be considered to acknowledge and benefit from its presence.

The latest proposal includes a wet garden that will feed into the pond via a swale. This will add to the habitat diversity. The drainage route from the pond is defined in the Hydrological and Hydrogeological Impact Assessment document and has been carefully designed to maintain and improve the existing situation.

ARCHITECTURE

- The panel finds much to admire in the architecture proposed for Fitzroy Park, and in particular think that Plots 1-3 promise high quality architecture on the street frontage.

Noted.

- As discussed above, adjustments to the design of Plots 4 and 5 may be needed to do more to protect the special landscape character of the site, and demonstrate that building five new homes will not be detrimental.

There are no specific comments relating to plot 4 - with the exception of the shared platform lift, which has been addressed above.

The massing and positioning of plot 5 has been revised significantly to address the concerns raised relating to the pond.

The architectural language of plots 4 and 5 has been supported by the panel since DRP 01.

NEXT STEPS

The panel is available to review the proposals again, if required.

The key concerns raised relate to the size and positioning of plot 5. The size of plot 5 has been reduced significantly, and it has been moved further away from the pond. The visibility of plot 5 from the Heath has been unaffected.

The other key concerns raised relate to the landscape design, which has been revised significantly to respond to the issues raised.

It is therefore felt that the concerns have been addressed, and so a third design review panel has not been requested.