



**Camden Design Review Panel**

**Report of Chair's Review Meeting: Bayham Street**

Friday 16 March 2018  
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

**Panel**

Catherine Burd (chair)  
Eleanor Fawcett  
Paddy Pugh  
Juliette Scalbert  
Adrian Wikeley

**Attendees**

Patrick Marfleet	London Borough of Camden
Neil McDonald	London Borough of Camden
Rebecca Ferguson	Frame Projects
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects

**Apologies / report copied to**

Frances Madders	London Borough of Camden
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Bethany Cullen	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.

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## 1. Project name and site address

7a, 7b, 7c Bayham Street, London, NW1 0EY

## 2. Presenting team

Andries Kruger	Ambigram Architects
Mark Carma	Ambigram Architects
Jen Coates	Heritage Collective
Kyri Hadjisoteris	GMG
Jonny Ordidge	GL Hearn
Kelly McCann	GL Hearn
Stuart Minty	SM Planning

## 3. Planning authority's views

The application site is for a plot on the west side of Bayham Street, currently occupied by three small office buildings at 7a, 7b and 7c Bayham Street. It is located within the Camden Town Conservation Area, but the existing buildings are not listed or identified as making a positive contribution to its character. Pre-application discussions have focused on the design of the scheme. Camden asked the panel for its advice on how well the designs respond to the varied character of Bayham Street and of the Conservation Area, including its industrial buildings. The panel were also asked to consider overall size and bulk in views from nearby King's Terrace and from the wider area.

## 4. Design Review Panel's views

### *Summary*

The panel feels that the scale and massing of the proposed building would have a negative impact on the Camden Town Conservation Area, as well as overshadow neighbouring properties and placing undue pressure on the public realm in Bayham Street. The height and bulk of the building are overbearing in relation to adjacent properties, and at odds with a townscape which steps down towards the site. The architectural expression of the building does not currently reflect the character of this part of the Conservation Area, with the proposed designs appearing commercial rather than industrial in character. The Bayham Street elevation is underdeveloped and lacks a convincing relationship to neighbouring buildings. The architectural approach should be informed by a more detailed understanding of the design characteristics of this part of the Conservation Area. The internal layout of the building is also compromised, with a large number of hotel rooms which will be small and lacking in daylight, and workspace lacking in natural light. Greater assurance is needed that the designs will meet the requirements of potential hotel operators, and that the proposed boutique hotel is deliverable. In the panel's view a reduction in the quantum of development will be needed to achieve a development that responds more successfully to its context, and provides higher quality hotel and office accommodation.



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## *Architectural expression*

- The panel think further work is needed to achieve a design that responds successfully to the character of this part of the Camden Town Conservation Area.
- The site is located in an area of the Camden Town Conservation Area with a character distinct from locations such as Camden Lock, which was referenced in the presentation. A greater understanding is needed of the qualities which make this particular part of the Conservation Area special. This work should form the basis of designs that both reflect and reinforce these qualities.
- The architecture was described as being inspired by industrial buildings in the vicinity – but the panel think the current proposals are more commercial in character.
- The façades of industrial buildings on Bayham Street are generally flat, whereas the proposed design includes brick corbelling and balconies. The proposed draught lobby also appears commercial, rather than industrial.
- The panel suggests introducing two entrances may help to reinforce the vertical expression of the elevation, in keeping with neighbouring buildings. Separate entrances for co-working and the hotel lobby may also prove more practical.

## *Height and scale*

- The panel has serious reservations about the proposed height of the development. Building heights currently step down across the urban block from Camden High Street and Mornington Crescent towards a smaller, more varied scale on Bayham Street, and a mews scale in Bayham Place and King's Terrace.
- The proposal does not respect the heights of neighbouring buildings: four storeys to the south and three storeys to the north. The current proposal appears excessively high, both out of proportion to adjacent buildings and unsympathetic to hierarchies of scale in the Conservation Area. Verified views are needed before the panel can assess the impact of the proposal from key viewpoints.
- In the panel's view, a shoulder height of three storeys on Bayham Street would achieve a better relationship with the existing townscape. A photomontage of the development in its street context could help inform continuing design work.
- Bayham Street is characterised by varied, small-scale façades, many of which are only two bays wide. The façade of the proposed building is eight bays wide, both larger and less varied than surrounding buildings.



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## *Site coverage*

- The proposed building appears to extend to its boundaries on all sides, and projects over Bayham Street. This creates challenging relationships with neighbouring properties, and a lack of generosity in terms of the public realm.
- The introduction of lightwells projecting into the street is damaging to the public realm and will reduce pedestrian space on an already narrow pavement.
- The decision to build out to the boundaries of the site on all sides has resulted in a building which dominates its neighbours, and appears too bulky for its setting. This leads the panel to conclude that the site is too small for the proposed quantum of development.

## *Internal layout*

- The panel feels that the quality of the basement and ground floor workspace spaces is compromised by their lack of daylight. This will also mean they are unlikely to meet the targeted BREAAAM Excellent rating.
- It is important that the proposed hotel use is viable, and assurances are needed that it will meet the requirements of a future operator. The design should be informed by discussions with potential operators.
- The volume of accommodation proposed for the site has a direct impact on the quality of internal spaces, and therefore the viability of the proposed use. A boutique hotel will require beautiful, generous spaces to appeal to a discerning audience. However, the proposed layout will create small rooms which lack natural light. In particular, rooms at the back will face directly on to the existing brick wall, with a gap of only one metre. Resolving these problems is likely to require a reduction in the amount of accommodation on the site.
- The combination of a workspace entrance and the hotel lobby is likely to create conflicts between uses that would cause problems for a hotel operator.
- The panel think the hotel is likely to require a kitchen around one third the size of the café it is serving. In the current plans, the kitchen space seems too small and may need to be reassessed.
- Bicycle storage in the basement, accessible only via a lift, is awkward and is less to be used it. This would be more successful if relocated to the ground level.



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## *Overlooking*

- The panel is concerned that the proposal will have a damaging effect on neighbouring properties. The building is likely to reduce daylight and sunlight for surrounding houses, and overshadow roof terrace amenity space to the north. More analysis is needed before the impact on neighbours can be fully assessed, including daylight and sunlight survey information and drawings that include the details of adjacent buildings.

## *Next steps*

- The panel would welcome an opportunity to review the designs again, once they have developed in response to its recommendations.

