



Camden Design Review Panel

Report of Chair's Review Meeting: Bayham Street

Friday 11 May 2018
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Richard Lavington

Attendees

Patrick Marfleet	London Borough of Camden
Charles Rose	London Borough of Camden
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Tom Bolton	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Bethany Cullen	London Borough of Camden
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Philippa Jopp	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.

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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
Chris Benham	GL Hearn
Kyri Hadjisoteris	GMG
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. The panel reviewed proposed designs earlier this year. Camden asked the panel for its views on changes made since the last review, and for its thoughts on how well the proposed relates to its immediate context and that of the wider Camden Town Conservation Area.

4. Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel feels that the designs have progressed significantly since the last review, but that work is still required to achieve the high standards of design required for this conservation area location. The scale and massing of the proposals are at the limit of what is acceptable for the site, and will only prove successful if the design is of a very high quality. The panel notes that the development strategy of building approximately one metre from the site boundaries, will limit the development potential of adjacent sites. Alternative options should be explored for bringing daylight into bedrooms, to avoid reliance on windows close to neighbouring properties. More detailed designs should be developed for the external envelope, to demonstrate high quality architecture responsive to its context. In particular, it will be important to show how the Bayham Street elevation will appear, and provide assurance that the designs will be of appropriate quality for the conservation area. The panel also feels that the design of the set-back top floor should be given a stronger architectural connection to the floors below, that the junction with the neighbouring building to the north should be given further thought, and the projecting element of the main façade should be refined. Although the reworked designs represent the building as separate, terraced forms, consideration should also be given to reinforcing this approach through variation in the roofline. These comments are expanded below.



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Height and scale

- The overall height of the proposals, reduced by one floor since the last review, is acceptable as long as the design quality is high enough, and architecture issues raised by the panel are addressed.
- The panel points out that the previous review identified three storeys as an appropriate shoulder height for the proposed building. It questions the proposals for a parapet at four-storey height instead, in line with the mansard storey of the houses to the south.
- The revised proposals address issues of excessive bulk and height raised at the previous review. However, the panel feels that the building is at the boundaries of an acceptable volume of development for the site.
- The building will be approximately one metre from the site boundary on most frontages, and will rely on windows very close to neighbouring façades. The potential for this to compromise development potential for adjoining owners is a development management issue, but the panel suggests that the option of building to the boundary line, and designing bedrooms looking on to a lightwell instead.

Internal layout

- The revised internal layout is a significant improvement, and the introduction of a new lightwell addresses the previous panel's concerns about daylight levels in the basement.

Bayham Street elevation

- The proposed building must be architecturally special if it is to enhance the conservation area. While the revised designs represent an improvement, the Bayham Street elevation is not yet of a high enough quality for the setting.
- More accurate and detailed images are needed to judge how the building will appear once built. The current images do not provide the detail required to demonstrate the high quality architecture needed for this conservation area location.
- As the architecture is developed in more detail, the panel suggests an edited palette of materials and texture for the Bayham Street façade. Detailing and materials should be used to ensure the elevation is not over-complicated, and works within the conservation area.
- The proposed Crittal-style windows will have to meet thermal regulations, and thermally broken windows are available, but have wider bars than those illustrated. The way the windows will be constructed and therefore how they will appear is very important to the success of the Bayham Street elevation.



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The panel previously suggested introducing two entrances to help reinforce the vertical expression of the elevation, in keeping with neighbouring buildings. The current scheme has responded to this by introducing a projecting bay, to articulate the Bayham Street façade as three sections. Panel members expressed different views on whether this was successful. This device could be seen to provide variety to the elevation, but may also appear too dominant in the elevation and overbearing in its relation to Bayham Street.

- The panel also recommended further thought about the way the building should relate to the pediment of the lower building to north.

Top-storey design

- The design for the set-back top floor should be developed further with enough detail to demonstrate the extent of the glazing, and how it will be applied.
- The design of the set-back top floor seems out of character with the building below. The panel feels more work is needed to develop a clear relationship between this element of the building and the floors below.

Next steps

- The panel recommends refinement of the architecture designs in response to the comments above, before planning approval.

