



Comments on Planning Application 2018/6016/P
Ragged School site Vine Hill/Eyre Street Hill

26 March 2019

Dear Ms Carr,

I am writing in respect of the above application. I object to the scale of the development on Eyre Street Hill and the use of the site as a “lifestyle” micro hotel. I object for the following reasons

1. Traffic

- a. Construction Traffic. The section in the application regarding construction traffic is out of date. There is now a prohibition on all motor vehicles in both directions at the Clerkenwell Road end of Eyre Street Hill. The lower half of Eyre Street Hill continues to be one way northbound. This means that construction traffic with either have to ignore the restrictions or enter the site by going down Back Hill, along Summers Street and then on the Eyre Street Hill. The traffic will then continue down Eyre Street Hill and turn on to Warner Street. Drivers will be keen to avoid the traffic light at the Roseberry Avenue/Farringdon Road junction so are likely to try to turn acutely right on to Warner Street, via a redesigned junction configured to discourage such turns, and then acutely left onto Bakers Road. Given that the whole area has been reconfigured as a cycle quiet way it seems lunacy to allow heavy construction traffic, which is proven to be very hazardous to cyclists, into this area. There is also an issue of considerable disturbance to the residents of Summer Street, Warner House and 24 Warner Street
- b. Hotel Traffic. The application states that a 160 room hotel with a food and drink offer can be serviced by 14 deliveries/collections a week. This seems delusional. Most of these deliveries and collections are likely to be in the very early morning which will cause a considerable disturbance to the local residents. The report doesn't make much, if any, mention of traffic generated by hotel guests. As with construction traffic, this will all have to come to site via Back Hill and Summer Street and exit via the cycle quietway. This will all put traffic into an area where millions of pounds have been spent in reconfiguring traffic flows and junctions to reduce traffic. It is an accident waiting to happen.

2. Hotel Use

The application is for the development to be used as a “lifestyle” micro hotel offering enhanced services. It details hotels in the area and gives examples of the sort of operators the developers are talking to. The application specifically mentions Premier Inn as a potential tenant. This seems odd as Premier Inn will be operating a new hotel located in the new development replacing the NCP car park at the top of Farringdon Road. It will be about 120m from the development. One wonders how realistic the prospects are of one of the other “contenders” wanting to operate a

hotel with compromised access and a view over an electricity substation. There is a concern that, having obtained planning consent, in the event of a deal not materialising with an operator, the developer will seek a change of use to, for example, student accommodation. Given that there are several residential blocks within 50m of the site, this would be completely unacceptable.

3. The Development

There is a great deal of narrative in the application regarding the area in which the proposed development is set. The proposed development is a monstrous overbuild and will ruin the character of what is an interesting and historic area. The Ragged School is a local landmark and a reminder of what a poor area Clerkenwell was. There are views of it along Summer Street and Eyre Street Hill as well as along Warner Street and the lower end of Bakers Row. The application dwells on how the overall height of the building fits within the area but completely discounts the fact that it is situated at the bottom of the Fleet Valley. At street level it will tower over every other building and, as is the way of these things it will set a precedent for future developments. Eyre Street Hill itself encapsulates the history of this corner of Clerkenwell. The three buildings at the bottom of the street are what remains of the Georgian part of the Warner Estate, according to the London Survey. Next to it is the Chiappa Building which is a reference to Clerkenwell's Italian heritage. The warehouses at the top are handsome reminders of Clerkenwell's industrial past. Despite all the architects' guff and flannel in the application, the proposed development will harm all of this. It will be more than twice as high as the Chiappa Building and will obscure all of the views of the Ragged School from Eyre Street Hill leaving just a glimpse of the tower. The developers before and after photographs are a masterpiece of developer obfuscation. The views of the school from Eyre Street Hill, Warners Str and Bakers row will be destroyed. It in no way mirrors or refers to the warehouse buildings in the area as claimed. These were all built using available materials and technology to admit the maximum amount of light. The façade of the proposed development exactly mirrors, on a monstrous scale, the mean and pinched dimensions of what is on offer inside, which is tiny rooms, some with no outside windows, that are barely bigger than the beds they will contain. While the surrounding buildings offer a rich variety of styles and materials the proposed development consists of a featureless cliff of aggregate (aka concrete) panels and blank widows. There is no doubt that the site needs to be developed but surely the area and the Ragged School deserve better than this. A 10 minute walk around the area will reveal many examples where less greedy developers have either replaced or renovated redundant buildings in a way that complements and enhances the area.

Yours faithfully

Tim Norman

