

7 February 2020

London Borough of Camden
Planning and Built Environment
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall,
Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE
FAO: Ms Jaspreet Chana

Dear Ms. J. Chana

20 Vicar's Road, London, NW5 4NL: Planning application for demolition of existing dwelling and redevelopment for two residential dwellings, referred to as The Cloud House (Planning Portal Reference PP-08302552)

Further to our pre-application discussions, I have the pleasure of submitting a planning application for development on the above site in Gospel Oak, comprising the demolition of the existing house at no.20 Vicar's Road and the site's redevelopment for two-residential units. The proposed dwellings would comprise a four-bedroom self-build family dwelling on the plot of no.20 and, on the adjoining plot, a three-bedroom dwelling. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr Peter Morris and Ms Emily Kennedy, the owners and current residents of the existing dwelling. Mr Morris is a RIBA Chartered Architect and designer of the application scheme.

The dwellings have been designed as one development – 'The Cloud House' – which is intended as an elegant, distinctive and innovative piece of contemporary architecture that is hoped would be a unique addition to the streets of Gospel Oak.

The Planning Application Submission

In reference to Camden Council's Local Validation Checklist, the application submission comprises:

1. This covering letter, incorporating a summary of the key planning issues relevant to the planning application and the affordable housing statement.
2. Application Form and Residential / Dwelling Units Supplementary Information Template.
3. Application drawings, as listed in Appendix 1 to this letter.
4. Air Quality Statement
5. Community Infrastructure Levy Additional Information Form.
6. Construction and Materials Statement
7. Daylight and Sunlight Study
8. Design and Access Statement, also including accessibility and sustainability statements
9. Energy Statement
10. Heritage Statement
11. Noise Assessment

PHONE

EMAIL

Nicola Furlonger MRTPI, 85 Judd Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2NJ

nicolafurlonger@outlook.com

Material samples and a 3D model will be made available for submission to officers once the application is validated.

Pre-application engagement

The proposal has been through an extended pre-application process, since early 2018, which has included its consideration by planning, design and conservation officers, the internal design review panel, and Camden Council's external 'Chair's Review' design panel. This has been coordinated for Camden Council by planning officer, Ms Jaspreet Chana, and design and conservation officer, Ms Colette Hatton. The scheme that is now submitted responds to the issues raised through this process and the applicant understands is supported by those parties involved in the pre-application process.

The applicants have also discussed the proposals with their neighbours, including the neighbouring residents of nos.18 Vicar's Road and those opposite at nos.51 and 53 Vicar's Road and with the adjoining school at no.22 Vicar's Road. All discussions have been positive, with residents and neighbours confirming their support for The Cloud House. [See correspondence at Appendix 2].

The Proposal

The application proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling at no.20 Vicar's Road and its replacement with 'The Cloud House', a sculptural building that is intended to be a flamboyant and distinctive addition to Vicar's Road, its cascade of pale arches creating a cloud-like quality to the elevations. These arches would be finished in a pale pink/buff colour render, with inset glazing. Ornate metal balustrades, side gates and front railings, which would match the finish of the window frames, would provide further detailing and a consistent material palette across the building.

The Cloud House would comprise two semi-detached dwellings, referred to as nos.20 and 20A Vicar's Road. Number 20 would be a self-build dwelling that would become the new family home for the applicant. No.20A would be placed on the market for sale.

The four-bedroom dwelling for the applicant's family would provide 167m² (GIA) accommodation over three floors with roof terrace above and an additional second floor terrace. The neighbouring three-bedroom dwelling at no.20A would contain 131m² (GIA), again over three floors but with a substantially reduced footprint at first and second floor levels. Both houses would have their principal living accommodation on upper floors. The tallest part of the building would be no higher than adjoining Grade II listed St Martin's Church Hall (now a language school), stepping down towards the new dwellings to the east.

Both properties would have a variety of outdoor spaces, including front and back gardens and terraces. For no.20, the roof-space would include a small plunge pool set within the open, landscaped terrace. In total, no.20 would have 49m² of open space, while no.20A would benefit from 41m² of private amenity space, both in excess of the Mayor's standards.

All garden space and the side path between no.20 and the neighbouring School at no.22 would be re-surfaced in a herringbone brick pattern, using recycled bricks from the existing house. Bespoke painted metal gates would be provided at the front entrances to each house; a matching metal pergola would be installed over the side path to no.20.

Dedicated secure cycle and refuse storage would be provided within the front gardens, concealed from view behind the decorative metal boundary fence and hedgerow.

Response to Key Planning Issues

To assist in the Council in its consideration, a summary of the key planning issues relating to the application proposal is provided below, having regard to the adopted Camden Local Plan (CLP) and London Plan that together comprise the statutory development plan for the site, alongside Camden and Mayoral planning guidance, National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

1. Housing delivery

The proposal responds to the CLP objective to secure growth through “high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings” (Policy G1). It would deliver housing in a way that optimises the use of the site, replacing one small dwelling that is in poor condition, with two new dwellings in a development that would be architecturally unique, innovative and responsive to its surroundings.

The development would contribute to the supply of dwellings in the Borough, providing self-contained housing in line with the identified ‘priority land use’ in CLP Policy H1. It would also fulfil the applicant’s aspiration to build his own family home, consistent with the Council’s (CLP Policy H6) and Government’s policy emphasis on supporting and encouraging the growth of self-build.

The dwellings would comply with the nationally described space standards and with the Building Regulations Accessibility Standard M4(2), in accordance with CLP Policy H6 and the adopted London Plan (see Design and Access Statement for accessibility details). Both homes would have access to a variety of private amenity spaces, in excess of the requirement set out in the Mayor of London’s Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and broadly in line with CLP Policy A2, when also taking into account the ease of access from the site to public open space, notably Hampstead Heath, and the expected contribution of the scheme to wider improvements through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

CLP Policy H4 expects a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100m², applying a sliding scale target. Payment in lieu is accepted where developments have a capacity for fewer than 10 additional dwellings. Paragraph 3.106 confirms that Camden “will not seek a contribution from schemes that simply extend or replace an existing home”. On this basis, an affordable housing contribution is proposed on the basis of the one additional dwelling at no.20A and in line with the affordable housing statement at Appendix 3.

2. Design

The application scheme seeks to secure the high-quality design envisaged in CLP Policy D1, following in the tradition of architectural innovation in Gospel Oak. It has evolved through robust analysis of the site and its context and this analysis is reflected in the application submission, as demonstrated in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This planning application submission follows extensive design development and consultation with Camden planning, design and conservation officers and a ‘Chair’s Review’ design panel. Written feedback from the Chair’s Review is contained in Appendix 4. This process has seen the design evolve through many iterations, shaped by the aspirations of the applicants and by the comments and advice of other important stakeholders. Notably, the Chair’s Review has supported the principle of redeveloping 20 Vicar’s Road “to provide a unique pair of semi-detached homes” and the “flamboyant architecture”, which, it stated, “could be successful in this context, provided that high quality construction can be achieved”.

The applicant’s objective has been to create a building that is both elegant and distinctive and that responds sensitively to its eclectic surroundings, which contain a mix of historic and contemporary buildings. It will bridge the gap between the adjoining buildings, stepping down from the neighbouring listed building (formerly St Martins Church Hall) towards its residential neighbours. While not attempting to repeat the architecture of its surroundings, which is notable for its diversity, the building would draw inspiration from prevalent features and the material palette in the locality, as well as from the history of design innovation in the area. The cascading arches that dominate the elevations draw their reference from the neighbouring listed buildings, while their buff/pink colour palette draws on prevalent local materials. The building would introduce a “softness” to the street scene that is currently lacking.

The Cloud House would replace the existing dwelling which, although of some aesthetic merit, is in a poor state of repair and continues to create major challenges for maintenance and liveability (refer to energy and sustainability statements). It would also replace the scruffy yard area adjoining no.20, completing and enhancing the street scene. In doing so, it is hoped that The Cloud House will become an asset to Vicar’s Road and Gospel Oak.

Discussions with neighbours have indicated support for the application; for example, one neighbour commented that The Cloud House would introduce, “... a valuable ‘softer’ element to the street’s dressing, with its hoops and curves and decorations. It is just what Vicar’s Road needs and will lighten and humanise the street.” [see Appendix 2]

For the applicant and the future residents of no.20A, The Cloud House would provide two new homes that are beautiful to live in, providing the highest quality, flexible internal spaces that will deliver an excellent quality of living for residents. Internal spaces would be matched by a series of well-planned outdoor spaces – the terraces and gardens. These areas have been designed to be lived in, with landscaping to soften and enhance the appearance of the spaces and contribute to climate change resilience.

More detail on the design principles is contained within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

3. Heritage

The existing house at no.20 Vicar’s Road is not listed, nor is the site within a Conservation Area. The site lies within the setting of two listed buildings, namely; (i) the former St Martin’s Church Hall, a Grade II listed building that borders the site to the west and north; and (ii) the Church of St Martin, a Grade I listed building, to the south west of the site on the southern side of Vicar’s Road.

The existing property at No.20 Vicar’s Road forms part of setting of these listed buildings, such that the proposed building would also be appreciated in the context of these assets from views east and west along Vicar’s Road. As such, and in line with national and local planning policy, the impact of the development on the significance of these assets (including their settings) has been assessed in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

There would be no direct impact on the listed buildings themselves through intervention in their fabric – the works would not involve the alteration or extension of a listed building [NB. The new gate and pergola would not be attached to the listed Church Hall]. Importantly, the development would not impact on the relationship between the two listed buildings, which have a clear architectural and historic relationship. There would be no interruption of views of the Church or the main façade of the former Church Hall or to their relationship with one another in views along Vicar’s Road. Further, there would be no change to the street trees and landscaping that forms an important part of the Church’s setting. Any impact would, therefore, relate entirely to changes in the setting of the listed buildings.

There would be a change in the scale of development on the site as the development would fill the plot more fully. This increase in scale would, however, be integrated with its surrounding through variations in the massing of the new building, with changes in height and the inclusion of setbacks and visual gaps. The tallest part of the Cloud House would sit below the roofline of the neighbouring listed building and drop down as it steps away to the east. A positive impact would arise from positioning the new building frontage further back than the existing dwelling, revealing more of the side return of the former Church Hall. A further cut out to the proposed no.20 at second floor level (the terrace) would further reveal high-level views of this side elevation.

The existing building is not designated or recognised locally as a heritage asset; while dating from a similar period to the nearby listed buildings and of some aesthetic merit, it does not have any clear visual relationship with the listed buildings. Following significant changes in the area, it is now something of a visual anomaly on the street. The existing dwelling is not considered to be a significant part of the setting to the listed building because of its isolation from the wider street scene. It is also in poor condition, with ongoing problems of damp. [see also the Sustainability Statement within the Design and Access Statement]

Benefit can be derived from filling the existing gap in the street, completing the street scene and replacing a building that has become out of place on Vicar’s Road. The proposed architecture is flamboyant and unique but would take design references from the important buildings in the vicinity – the arches, material palette and ‘fairy-tale’ architecture of the listed Church and Church Hall. It would be a positive new addition to the street and to the setting of the listed buildings.

Overall, the proposed dwellings would make a positive contribution to the Vicar’s Road street scene through contextual design and the sensitive use of materials. It would preserve the significance of the listed buildings and enhance their setting by adding to the richness of the architectural composition of the area, in accordance with CLP Policy D2.

4. Amenity

CLP Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours, granting planning permission for development that will not cause unacceptable harm to amenity. The application site is bound by its immediate neighbours – residential dwellings to the east and north and the School to the west. The development has had full regard to amenity issues, taking into account both the amenity of existing residents and neighbouring uses and those of future residents.

Residential neighbours comprise the new three storey town houses to the east and the four-storey 'Cherry Court' flats to the north. The new development would complete and strengthen the building line and frontage on the north side of Vicar's Road and, as such, it would intentionally sit relatively close to its neighbours on the east and west, establishing a more typical pattern of development. Gaps would be left on both sides of The Cloud House to separate the buildings visually and preserve the amenity of the properties either side. This would include a full height gap adjoining the School and a gap above ground floor between no.20A and the neighbouring residential property. There would be no windows in the east elevation, avoiding any adverse overlooking or privacy impact.

In terms of the relationship with the adjoining School, particular care has been taken to protect the privacy of the School through the careful positioning of windows and by limiting their number.

With regards to the four storey flats to the rear, much of the new property will be concealed from view by the School, which wraps around the rear of the application site. Privacy between properties would be protected, again, by careful positioning of windows and by positioning non-habitable space (i.e. the staircases) in the rear part of the new 20A.

At an early stage of design development, Right of Light Consulting were instructed by the applicant to help ascertain a 'maximum envelope' for the building that would ensure sunlight and daylight levels to adjoining properties were maintained at acceptable levels. The proposed building would sit within this envelope, such that there would be no unacceptable impact on sunlight and daylight to neighbouring properties, as demonstrated by the accompanying Daylight and Sunlight Study. Noise impacts are also assessed in the accompanying report.

5. Sustainability

The proposal involves the knocking down of an existing house to facilitate the development of two new family dwellings. In these circumstances, Policy CC1 of the Camden Local Plan requires that applicants demonstrate that it is not possible to retain and improve the existing building. This justification is set out in full in the sustainability statement (within the Design and Access Statement) which explains that the existing dwelling is in a poor state of repair with a great deal of damp in evidence. While the applicants have done as much as possible to keep the house in a good state of repair, the dampness in the walls and the fact that the house has earth directly beneath it means that long-term damp and insulation problems remain.

The objective of the proposal is to create a new family home for the applicant, alongside the delivery of an additional family home for sale. Refurbishment alone would not provide the quality of accommodation or space to deliver on these objectives. The applicant has been through extensive design discussions with officers at Camden, which have looked at alternative options to improve and expand the residential accommodation on the site. While this has included options for both re-use/extension of the existing dwelling and redevelopment of the site, Camden officers and the Camden Design Panel (Chair's Review) have endorsed the principle of redeveloping 20 Vicar's Road to provide "a unique pair of semi-detached homes".

It has been concluded that the most sustainable solution for this site is to demolish the old house and replace it with an energy-efficient high-quality development, built with sustainable materials, that will be designed to last for many years.

The sustainability principles that have been adopted are explained in the Energy Statement and Design and Access Statement; these include passive design measures, the incorporation of renewable energy technology (air source heat pumps) and many other sustainability measures. As demonstrated in the Energy Statement, the measures implemented through the energy hierarchy would

result in two dwellings that achieve in over 30% reductions in carbon dioxide emissions over the 2013 Building Regulation standards, well in excess of the Camden Local Plan (Policy CC1) requirement.

Concluding remarks

The Cloud House would provide two inspiring new homes – including one self-build dwelling – within a building of distinctive design, intended to be a striking addition to Vicar’s Road and to Gospel Oak. Quality internal spaces would be complemented by generous and varied outdoor spaces and landscaping. The design responds to its varied surroundings, including the two listed buildings in the vicinity. The development would fill an incongruous gap in the existing streetscape of Vicar’s Road, with heights and massing varied to reflect the scale of its neighbours, including the listed former Church Hall.

The design of the building would complement the heritage assets and, through improving the street scene, would enhance the setting of the two nearby listed buildings. Amenity impacts have been carefully considered to ensure there would be no unacceptable impacts on existing residents and occupants.

Overall, the proposed application scheme would meet with the requirements of policy and guidance, and with relevant standards, and would achieve a high-quality, sustainable development of exemplary design in accordance with the CLP and NPPF.

I look forward to your confirmation that the application is duly validated and that the decision-making process is underway. Please do contact me if you have any questions regarding the application or the proposed development.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Furlonger MRTPI
Chartered Town Planner

c.c. Peter Morris and Emily Kennedy 20 Vicar’s Road

APPENDIX ONE

20 Vicar's Road, London: Schedule of Application Drawings

Planning application drawings

Drawing name	Reference	Revision	Scale @A3
Site Plan (including application boundary)	201 110	-	1:1250 and 1:500
Demolition Plan (1 of 2)	205 305	-	1:50
Demolition Plan (2 of 2)	205 306	-	1:50

Ground Floor Plan (Existing and Proposed)	201 111	B	1:100
First Floor Plan (Existing and Proposed)	201 112	C	1:100
Second Floor Plan (Existing and Proposed)	201 113	C	1:100
Roof Plan (Existing and Proposed)	201 114	C	1:100
Detailed Ground Floor Plan	201 300	C	1:50
Detailed Ground Floor Front Plan	201 301	A	1:50
Detailed First Floor Plan	201 302	C	1:50
Detailed Second Floor Plan	210 303	C	1:50
Detailed Roof Plan	201 304	C	1:50

South Elevation (Existing and Proposed)	201 120	C	1:100
North Elevation (Existing and Proposed)	201 121	B	1:100
East Elevation (Existing and Proposed)	201 122	B	1:100
West Elevation (Existing and Proposed)	201 123	B	1:100
South Elevation (Detailed)	201 310	C	1:50
South Elevation (Detailed) with boundary	201 318	-	1:50
North Elevation (Detailed)	201 312	B	1:50
East Elevation (Detailed)	201 316	B	1:50
West Elevation (Detailed)	201 314	B	1:50
West Elevation (Detailed) - Extract	201 315	-	1:50

Section AA	201 320	B	1:50
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APPENDIX TWO**Correspondence with neighbours****Feedback from La Petite Ecole Bilingue at 22 Vicar's Road**

London, 22nd Januray 2020

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm that I, Charlotte Beyazian, Head of administration at Stewart International School – La Petite Ecole Bilingue Kentish Town, located at 22 Vicars road LONDON NW5 4NL, have had the great pleasure of being presented with the future architectural project known as The Cloud House, 20 Vicars Road designed by Peter Morris.

All plans, decisions drawn in line with the project have been duly explained to me and I see absolutely no objection to any of them ; the upgrading project regarding the shared alleyway between our two buildings, receives my full support, as it will bring a huge enhancement to our own premises while ensuring all health and safety matters are been carefully thought through.

Sincerely,

Charlotte BEYAZIAN
Head of administration



Stewart International School
La Petite Ecole Bilingue de Kentish Town
22 Vicars Road, London, NW5 4NL
Tel: 020 7284 2820
education@stpetr.com

Email feedback from resident of no.53 Vicar's Road

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Emily [redacted]
Date: Fri, 24 Jan 2020 at 11:16
Subject: The Cloud House in Vicars Rd
To: [redacted]

Hi Emily, Peter,

thank you so much for showing us your plans for 20 Vicars Rd.

This is a really exciting project which I believe will much improve the general look of Vicars Road.

The recently completed 'St Martin's Walk' of 21 apartments, together with the semi detached pair of houses, 16 and 18 Vicars Rd, are, in their way, handsome and certainly an improvement on the old garages they replaced, but are thought by a number of us local residents to be somewhat 'blocky,' angular and austere.

Your project, The Cloud House, introduces a valuable 'softer' element to the street's dressing, with its hoops and curves and decorations. It is just what Vicars Road needs and will lighten and humanise the street

When it does go ahead can we ask you to keep in mind:

1. The need to minimise dust production, particularly during the demolition phase. The Council achieved this by having a fine mist of water from hose nozzles at each corner of their site.
2. The need to check noise wherever possible and to keep the work within reasonable hours. In our house Joanna sees clients for psychotherapeutic help frequently throughout the week. The French school will have its classes going 8:30 to 4:30. The church will have its baptisms and its funeral services at various times, only a few meters from your building site.
- 3.

We wish you every success in your project and look forward with pleasure and interest to the finished product.

Email feedback from resident of no.18 Vicar's Road

From: [redacted]
Date: Sun, 2 Feb 2020 at 11:35
Subject: Re: Thank you!
To: [redacted]

Hello Emily

Sorry for the late response [redacted]

I really appreciate you taking the time out to come over and discuss your plans on the building work you plan to go ahead (the cloud house). Showing us the pictures and going through in detail. (Although I do agree it looks a bit bonkers).

As we discussed my concerns are, my right for light we don't want to feel closed in and that is the only place we get the sun in the summer so wouldn't want to lose it as discussed. Also that no rooms are looking in on my top bedroom.

Also I understand that the work will need to be carried out and may make some noise/disturbance but could we please be mindful of others during school run times and over the weekend.

I understand that you have gone through all the things I have mentioned above and assured me that my rights to light will not be affected, that no rooms will be looking in onto my property and that the building work will be properly managed and considerate to others nearby.

So as long as the things above are all thoroughly locked into I have no concern with the build going ahead and wish you and Peter all the best.

Kind regards
[redacted]

APPENDIX THREE

Affordable Housing Statement

Floorspace Schedule

The following table provides a breakdown of existing and proposed floorspace resulting from the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of two new dwellings on the site of 20 Vicar's Road.

	Gross Internal Area m ²	Gross External Area m ²
Existing Dwelling	75	95
Proposed Replacement Dwelling at No.20 Vicar's Road	167	195
Proposed New Dwelling at No.20A Vicar's Road	131	152
Total Proposed Floorspace	298	347
	- 75	- 95
Net Floorspace Gain	223	252

Affordable Housing Requirement

Policy H4 of the Camden Local Plan expects "a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100sqm". It applies a "sliding scale target", whereby each new home is expected to provide a 2% contribution towards affordable housing (up to 25 new dwellings, where a 50% target applies). The number of additional dwellings is based on an assessment of development capacity whereby each additional 100sqm GIA is generally considered to create capacity for one home.

Payment in lieu is accepted where developments have a capacity for fewer than 10 additional dwellings.

Paragraph 3.106 explains the affordable housing requirements set out in Policy H4. It states that: "We will negotiate to seek an affordable housing contribution from schemes that involve one or more additional homes but will not seek a contribution from schemes that simply extend or replace an existing home." On this basis, the replacement dwelling at number 20 Vicar's Road is discounted for the purpose of the affordable housing calculation.

Calculation of contribution to affordable housing

The new dwelling at no.20A would provide 131m² GIA floorspace. For the application of the sliding scale target in Policy H4, this would equate to the provision of one new affordable dwelling (when rounded to the nearest 100m².)

Based on *Figure IH6 Calculating payments in lieu of affordable housing* in Camden's Interim Housing Planning Guidance, the following financial contribution would arise:

Additional residential floorspace (GIA)	Capacity (rounded floorspace addition / 100m²)	Affordable housing target (capacity x 2%)	GEA	Affordable housing floorspace target	Payment in lieu
131 sq m (no.20A only)	1 additional home	2%	152	2% x 152 = 3.04	3.04 x £2,650 = £8,056

APPENDIX FOUR**Response from Chair's Review design panel, 26 April 2019**

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London Borough of Camden Design Review Panel

Report of Chair's Review Meeting: 20 Vicars Road

Friday 26 April 2019
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AC

Panel

Catherine Burd (chair)
Scott Grady

Attendees

Jaspreet Chana	London Borough of Camden
Kevin Fisher	London Borough of Camden
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Adela Paparisto	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Richard Wilson	London Borough of Camden
Edward Jarvis	London Borough of Camden
Bethany Cullen	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

The Cloud House, 20 Vicars Road, London NW5 4NL

2. Presenting team

Peter Morris	Peter Morris Architects
Emily Kennedy	Developer / site owner
Nicola Furlonger	Independent Town Planner

3. Planning authority's views

The site is a small two storey Victorian house which is located to the west side of Vicars Road. The house is built in a Gothic style and is around 75 square metres, with arched windows and a pitched roof. The land to the side of the house is used as garden area. The scheme proposes demolition of the existing house and construction of two semi-detached family houses – one with four bedrooms (to be a home for the architect and his family) and one with three bedrooms (to be sold). Camden planning officers feel that the scale and massing of the development is likely to be acceptable. They asked for the panel's views on how well the architecture and materials would fit into the context, and on its buildability.

4. Design Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel supports the principle of redeveloping 20 Vicars Road, to provide a unique pair of semi-detached homes, but thinks that some editing and refining of the flamboyant architecture will be needed to achieve a deliverable scheme. It has no reservations about the scale of the proposals, but suggests some refinements to the building's massing. It thinks the unconventional elevational treatment could be successful in this context, provided that a sophisticated level of detailing and high quality construction can be achieved. This is likely to require some simplification of the designs. For example, the panel think it would be preferable to express the materiality of the Glass Fibre Reinforced Concrete (GFRC) construction, rather than cladding it with brick slips. They also highlight that the triple glazing as currently drawn would be extremely expensive, because of the size of panes. There may be scope for greater economy in some areas, to ensure that the elements that matter most are delivered to a high quality. As this work continues, it will be important to show all of the practical aspects of the building, such as columns, opening windows, and downpipes. The panel feels the current drawings do not do the scheme justice, and, once the detail is developed, one or two professional computer generated images (CGIs) could help to better illustrate the development, as part of the planning submission. These comments are expanded below.



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Scale and massing

- In broad terms, the panel supports the scale and massing of the development, which appears to sit comfortably between the neighbouring existing buildings.
- The panel questioned whether the upper levels of the right hand house need to be set back so far?
- An alternative approach could be to bring this section of the façade in line with the ground floor, to create a loggia around the terrace at first floor level. This would avoid the need for the balustrade with arching form, which may seem a bit odd.

Architecture

- The panel thinks the flamboyant architecture could be successful in this context, provided that high quality construction can be achieved. This is likely to require some simplification and rationalisation of the designs.
- The panel questioned whether the intention is for the external envelope to be integral with the internal structure, or if the building is conceived of as a simple volume with a separately articulated decorative wrap. Clarity on this will inform detail design decisions.
- If the former, the panel would encourage exploration of barrel vaulted ceilings internally - extruding the form of the arches on the facades into the interior.
- Externally, the corners of the building are not convincingly resolved. Introducing more solidity might help avoid creating junctions that are difficult to build.
- The panel feels the current drawings do not do the scheme justice, and one or two professional computer generated images (CGIs) could help to better illustrate the development, as part of the planning submission.
- At a detailed level, the panel queried whether the entrance under a staircase might seem quite low.
- The layout of bedrooms at ground floor level could also be refined – to create a more generous lightwell, avoid an opening window onto a neighbouring garden and simplify the party wall.

Glass Fibre Reinforced Concrete (GFRC)

- The panel think it would be preferable to express the materiality of the GFRC construction, rather than cladding it with brick slips.



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- A review of the design to minimise the number of moulds required to fabricate the CFRC would also help ensure that costs and complexity are well managed.
- It supports the idea of grey or buff masonry, which would relate well to the context.

Glazing

- The scale of the glazing currently shown, with curved tops, is likely to make it very expensive. Introducing some solid panels, perhaps in glazed tiles, could add interest, be more affordable, and provide flexibility to deal with floor plates and privacy issues.
- The panel also suggests reducing glazing on the east and west elevations, which may need to be fire rated insulated glass because of its proximity to the site boundaries.

Structure and construction

- The panel would like to better understand the structure of the building and locations/size of internal columns & floor slabs in relation to the external cladding and windows. This would give confidence that the construction of the building can be resolved, particularly given the heavy loads from the roof top swimming pool.
- The panel notes that columns, frames for opening windows, and downpipes, not currently shown, should be included on planning drawings in order to give confidence in the quality of the completed building.
- The experimental nature of the construction proposed means that a greater than normal level of detail should be submitted on materials and construction as part of the application. External wall / floor details at 1:20, and 1:5 details at key junctions would be helpful.
- The panel also recommends that any planning approval should require approval of sample panels.

Next Steps

The panel would be happy to comment on the proposals for 20 Vicars Road again, if asked to do so by planning officers.

