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FAO Gavin Sexton

9 November 2020

Our ref: J10381/LJW/ANE/KHU

Your ref: 2020/3881/FULL

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Belgrove House, London
Amendments to Application Ref: 2020/3881/FULL

We write on behalf of Precis Advisory and Access Self Storage Limited to submit amendments to planning application reference 2020/3881/FULL at Belgrove House. These amendments respond to feedback received during the consultation period.

The planning application was submitted and registered on 1st September 2020 and the statutory consultation period expired on the 16th October 2020. The application seeks planning permission for:

‘Redevelopment of Belgrove House as a part 5 part 10 storey building plus 2 basement levels for use as office and research and laboratory floorspace; with cafe, flexible retail and office floorspace at ground floor; an auditorium at basement; incorporating step free entrance to Kings Cross Underground station in place of two entrance boxes along Euston Road; together with terraces at fourth and fifth floor levels, servicing, cycle storage and facilities, refuse storage and other ancillary and associated works.’

Background and Consultation

Following the end of the consultation period we have now received most statutory consultation responses expected inclusive of the GLA (Greater London Authority) Stage 1 report, Historic England’s comments and comments from TfL (Transport for London), in addition to public consultation responses from a range of stakeholders. The applicant and the design team have also undertaken a number of design workshops with officers in respect of revisions to the proposals. A summary of key consultation points is summarised in the following sections.

Much of the comments written in objection relate to the height, bulk and massing of the proposed building and as such the applicant and the design team have worked with officers at LB Camden and have undertaken 3no design workshops since submission of the application. A number of design amendments are now proposed in response to comments arising from the consultation on the application and seek to reduce the impact from bulk, scale and massing on the pedestrian experience at street level of Belgrove and Crestfield Street. These are set out below.

The Proposals

The impact of the bulk and mass of the proposal has been raised at various points during the consultation, and the team has taken steps to reduce the impact where possible. The massing of the building is configured to respond to the two different contexts at the front and rear of the site. It does this by stepping down from G+9 storeys on Euston Road to G+4 storeys on Argyle Sq. At the point of transition between the higher and lower massing is located the circulation core, containing vertical circulation, bathrooms and service risers. Through a series of studies, we have been able to adjust the massing and articulation of this element to reduce its impact on the skyline:

- The sides of the core have been moved in on both Belgrove and Crestfield Streets, across the full height of the building. Greater articulation has been provided with the addition of a riser element in the centre of the core which echoes similar elements around the building perimeter. This helps to clarify the function of the core, identifying it as performing a similar purpose to the other external risers.
- The move inwards of the core sides has helped to reveal the full depth of the double skin façade to the office accommodation when viewed from the South. This gives a clearer expression to this important feature of the building and allows a glimpse of the greenery in this zone that was previously concealed.
- At the top of the core a number of moves have been made to reduce the bulk of the core where it is seen against the sky. This includes reducing the height of the corners which are most prominent in a number of views.
- The treatment of the brick elements has been rationalised so that all corners are now radiused, serving to soften the building against the skyline.
- Further detailed articulation at the top of the primary south facing core elements further breaks up their mass.
- The south elevation between the cores has been pushed in, with symmetrical glazed lobbies added either side to mirror those on the outside of the core. This helps to reduce the perception of mass from the rear.
- At the top level, where impact on the skyline is greatest, the plant room enclosure has been further pushed back to reduce the impact of the mass.

In combination we believe these changes have a significant impact on the bulk and mass of the building, particularly when viewed from the South.

Further adjustments have been made to the rooftop plant enclosure as follows:

- At the top of the building on the North, the connection points between the risers and the plant enclosure have been reduced in height. This separation brings greater clarity to the sculptural characteristics of the north risers which are seen against the skyline in a similar way to the clock tower of Kings Cross Station.
- The rooftop plant enclosure itself is primarily seen in the longer views of the building, and we have introduced a 'green screen' here to help express the identity of the building as one that

brings nature and greenery into the city. This approach has recently been tested on another central London project with great success.

Adjustments have also been made to the lower levels of the building where it faces the Georgian terraces of Belgrove and Crestfield Streets:

- The rhythm of the glazing and brick elements have previously been established to respond to the scale and proportions of the terrace frontages.
- In the latest adjustments the size of the glazed elements within the oriel window bays between the brickwork risers have been further refined and reduced in scale. Previously split into four large panes of glass, the oriel elements are now subdivided into 9 smaller pieces of glass in order to respond better to the scale and proportion of the buildings opposite.
- The size of the glazed elements facing Euston Rd remains unchanged, reinforcing the change in context at this point.

A drawing schedule has been included within the submission which details the originally submitted [and now superseded] drawing references and the proposed drawing references.

In heritage terms the conclusion remains (and as supported by Historic England) that should the development constitute harm, it would be 'less than substantial' and is outweighed to a significant degree, in the context of the duties to have special regard for preserving the significance of the affected heritage assets, by the public benefits this scheme will offer.

In addition to the revisions set out above which respond to comments in respect of the impact of the height, bulk and massing of the building, the revisions to the design also include a lowering of the basement by 1.5m across part of the building.

This relates to the portion of the basement slab to the south of the core and is illustrated in section drawing P303. This adjustment is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient floor-to-ceiling height to meet the requirements of the specialist equipment to be located in this area by the tenant.

The changes set out above will require the BIA (Basement Impact Assessment) to be updated. This is underway and the applicant's technical design team are in discussion with Campbell Reith, who are the independent assessors of the BIA, acting for LB Camden.

Documentation:

The formal submission of the design revisions set out above comprises:

- This Covering Letter; prepared by Gerald Eve,
- Superseded plans and drawings (as set out above); prepared by AHMM; and
- Addendum to the Townscape, Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment; prepared by Peter Stewart Consultancy

I trust the amendments enclosed respond adequately to comments arising from the consultation period and goes some way to reducing the impact of the bulk and massing as discussed in the body of this letter.

I'd be grateful if you could include this submission in the suite of application documentation available on the public domain and would supersede the original plans and drawings submitted with the application as set out above. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Hughes of this office (020 3486 3494) should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Gerald Eve LLP

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