

Our ref: 25619

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Mr D Fowler
Principal Planning Officer
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5 Pancras Square
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Dear David,

**THE FRANCIS CRICK INSTITUTE, 1 MIDLAND ROAD, LONDON NW1 1AT
LEVEL 05 TERRACE - EASTERN ELEVATION – CREATION OF AN AMENITY AREA**

The Francis Crick Institute ("The Crick") is proposing to establish an outside amenity area at the eastern end of its premises, the Midland Road end, at 5th floor level, above the main entrance to the building. The amenity area would be restricted to the north-eastern side of the building.

Following pre-application discussions with the Council in 2021 regarding the need, approach and subsequent methodologies relating to the supporting information required to support this application, we have been instructed by The Crick to submit the relevant application for their proposals. Accordingly, please find attached the relevant submission.

We would confirm that our client is seeking permission for:

"The installation of a permeable deck above the existing brown roof on the eastern end level 05 terrace, together with a refreshment kiosk under the roof eaves, provision of perimeter planters, glass safety screen and additional landscaping"

The planning application has been submitted via Planning Portal (PP-11343104) and comprises this covering letter and the following documents:

- Application Form (including completed Certificate B);
- CIL Liability Forms (no liability as new floorspace threshold is not reached);
- Planning Statement;
- Design & Access Statement;
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment;
- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Drainage Statement;
- Existing Elevations;
- Existing Plans;

- Proposed Elevations;
- Proposed Plans;
- Proposed Section;
- Planting Plan; and,
- CGI's of existing and proposed views along Midland Road.

The requisite planning application fee of £234.00 and £32.20 Planning Portal administrative fee has been paid online.

Planning History

Planning permission (2010/4721/P) was approved on 10th March 2011 for:

“Development to provide a biomedical research centre including laboratory and research space, lecturing and teaching space, exhibition space and a community facility; landscaped public open spaces; a new pedestrian route between Midland Road and Ossulston Street; a service entrance off Brill Place and a relocated vehicular access from Midland Road to serve the British Library”.

The permission incorporated 365sqm of brown roofs, in two specific areas, which are protected by condition 5 to The Crick's planning permission in that these areas are to be “*permanently retained and maintained*”.

In addition, each brown roof area also formed part of the sustainable drainage scheme for the building and Chapter 5 of the EIA, para 5.91 described Level 05 as comprising the *brown roofs and geocellular [drainage] attenuation*.

Following the grant of planning permission, a Non-Material Amendment application was approved on 6th September 2017 (2017/4416/P) for the installation of a textual feature on Midland Road, specifically the engraving of 'The Francis Crick Institute'. Due to construction issues, the text could not be engraved into the wall and a further Non-Material Amendment (2017/7084/P) was approved on 26th February 2018 to mount the lettering.

A planning application was submitted in May/June 2022 for a de-minimis elevational change to Level 02, above the rear entrance to the building, at the Ossulston Street end, comprising the erection of a glass balustrade. This submission is currently being processed.

The only other applications have been a variety of advertisement consent submissions, which are not relevant to these proposals.

The Proposals

These proposals relate to 161sqm of the total area of brown roofs approved under the original application, and it should be noted that the proposals do not seek either the removal of the existing brown roof or any change to the sustainable drainage system. Instead, the application seeks the installation of a deck over the existing brown roof, the installation of a small refreshment kiosk in the eaves of the existing roof, the erection of a glass balustrade, the installation of planters, additional landscaping and the provision of a

fall-arrest system around the edge of the terrace. This latter element comprises a safety upgrade and is not specifically part of the overall development.

These proposals come about as a result of two significant factors. The first relates to events of the past two years and The Crick re-evaluating the wellbeing needs of its staff and recognising that it must provide amenity opportunities for staff within its own complex away from laboratories and breakout/collaboration areas, which are the primary work areas outside laboratories. The second is the loss of immediately accessible amenity space immediately opposite the Crick, within the Purchase Street Open Space.

This area is now being developed for residential purposes, but it was intended to serve the Crick's needs for which the Crick made a substantial contribution through its S106 agreement to its original planning application, to fund the improvement, maintenance, and upkeep of existing open spaces in the vicinity of the development and targeted in particular at the Purchase Street Open Space (see S.106 Definitions).

The negotiations at the time (2010) intended that Crick employees would use the Purchase Street Open Space to the northern side of Brill Place, and this was one of the drivers to the crucible design for the building and the curtain walling in the centre of the Brill place frontage, opposite the open space. The bringing forward of the Council's own development proposals for Somers Town, including Plot 7, the Brill Place Tower, has seen the loss of this key area and the Crick is looking to how alternative amenity space can be provided.

In principle the nature of the proposals that now form this application were supported during the pre-application engagement which comprised both a site visit and more detailed virtual meeting to review the key planning issues. The meeting also discussed the methodology and approach to addressing those.

The key issues identified comprised:

- Views from ground level.
- Ecology and Biodiversity – for which the Council requested that the application be accompanied by an Initial Ecological Assessment and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Appraisal.
- Noise – given the proximity of sensitive neighbours to the north. Although it was not considered that a full noise impact assessment was required, The Crick commissioned the relevant study to consider the impacts of both the Level 02 (see Planning History Section) and Level 05 submissions.
- A Drainage Statement – to address the potential impacts to the Sustainable Drainage Scheme embedded in the existing brown roof.

During the site visit, it was identified that the proposals would be almost indiscernible from ground level as the amenity space would be set approximately 1400mm behind the current railings and behind new raised planters to be provided in that zone. Accordingly, the Council asked that existing and proposed CGI's be produced to accompany the submission to demonstrate the observations made on the site visit. Relevant drawings accompany the submission, and in addition, we have also provided enlarged extracts of the terrace areas as part of the elevational drawings.

The parties also recognised that the adjacent building, St Pancras International, was the only principal building at the same height as the terrace and with direct views towards it. Given the nature of the station use, it was not considered that it would be adversely affected by the proposals, and the St Pancras building itself would also shield the terrace from longer distance views. Consideration was given to Plot 7 (Brill Tower) where views are oblique in nature, but the existing roof would shield the terrace. Consequently, it was also considered that the tower would not be materially impacted by the proposals either.

With respect to the ecology, biodiversity and drainage issues, the Crick recognises that the brown roof has two purposes, the first in respect to supporting the Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS) and the second its biodiversity value.

Biodiversity and biodiversity net gain are important consideration in the planning process and there is an expectation that developments should result in an uplift in biodiversity values over the existing situation.

Within the London Plan, Policy G6 covers both biodiversity and access to nature. It sets out that development proposals should manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. This should be informed by the best available ecological information and addressed from the start of the development process.

The Camden Local Plan Policy A3 Biodiversity outlines that the Council will protect and enhance sites of nature conservation and biodiversity. The Council will assess developments against their ability to realise benefits for biodiversity through the layout, design and materials used in the built structure and landscaping elements of a proposed development, proportionate to the scale of development proposed.

Camden also has supplementary planning guidance on this issue in a Camden Planning Document dated 2018, which requires applicants to consider opportunities to improve biodiversity in all proposals.

In pre-application discussions with the Council the issues associated with the current ecological and biodiversity levels were discussed and the methodology for undertaking the respective assessments agreed. The various reports and surveys submitted with this application shows that the existing brown roofs are not performing as well as should be expected although it was recognised that when the original development was brought forward, there was no requirement in policy to set performance standards.

The approach to the design seeks to ensure that the brown roof continues to meet the original expectations for it and, that it remains as viable as it can be, given the circumstances. The proposals therefore seek to retain the brown roof through the installation of a permeable deck above it. The permeability of the platform will ensure that water will pass through the platform to the brown roof below and feed the sustainable drainage system below. The design ensures that there is no material affect to preventing water reaching the structures below the platform and the application is accompanied by a Drainage Statement confirming the situation in respect to the sustainable draining scheme.

Within the deck there will be a series of cut out areas to promote access by birds, insects etc to the brown roof below and these will be enhanced with new planting some of which will be below the deck but designed to grow through it. In addition, and as part of the Level 02 proposals, additional planting is proposed on the deck and around Level 02 which cumulatively increases and enhances the biodiversity level of the Crick itself and meets the policy requirements. This is set out in the Initial Ecological Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, which are submitted with the application.

The Crick is cognisant that there are residential properties to the north of their site, and although the Council did not specifically ask for a Noise Impact Assessment to be undertaken as part of these proposals, The Crick resolved to undertake one nevertheless. This shows that the proposals would not result in any adverse noise impacts given the distance (and height) of the terrace, the setting back of the amenity area from the existing edge, plus the installation of the glass balustrade on the residential properties below.

Finally, The Crick has also considered access arrangements to /from the terrace and how staff will reach this area from within the main building. The terrace will be served by both lift and stair access. The access from the lift has been designed to ensure that at the threshold of the access door, between the

building and the outside, is flat and level. The door will be replaced with a larger, wider, door of similar style to enable wheelchair passage between the two areas. The connecting corridor will be of sufficient width to allow two wheelchairs to pass without conflict. This ensures that all users will be able to access the amenity area from a level plain, without having to step over any threshold or negotiate steps to do so.

Summary

The provision of an amenity area at Level 05 will provide a much-needed amenity area for all staff. The approach to the design has had due regard to the original purpose of this area as a brown roof incorporating a sustainable drainage scheme. Neither feature will be impacted by the proposals.

The accompanying surveys demonstrate that the existing brown roof is performing poorly, and these proposals will represent a considerable enhancement in the maintenance, management and biodiversity contribution of the area in comparison. As such, the proposals comply with the objectives and requirements of the statutory development plan and supplementary guidance.

The Crick has also had due regard to its responsibilities as a considerate neighbour and the various surveys and assessments that have been undertaken have sought to gauge how, if at all, how the proposals might impact its neighbours, particularly the residential uses to the north. These surveys show that the proposals would not adversely affect those neighbours.

Accordingly, we trust that we have provided sufficient information for you to be able to register and consider the application, and we look forward to receiving confirmation of this in due course. However, should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Natasha Coakley at this office (natasha.coakley@rpsgroup.com/ 02078321392).

Yours sincerely,

For RPS Consulting Services Ltd



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