



CONFIDENTIAL

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Our ref: DRP/104

Date: 23 November 2016

Dear Aimee Squires,

ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

RE: 55-61 Brewery Road, London, N7 9QH (planning application ref. P2015/5102/FUL)

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 26 July 2016 for a first review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a 5-storey (plus basement) building incorporating a total of 1,319sqm (GEA) of B1 office and 426sqm (GEA) of B1(c) floorspace (officer's description).

Review Process

The Design Review Panel provides expert impartial design advice following the 10 key principles of design review established by Design Council/CABE. The scheme was reviewed by Richard Portchmouth (chair), Paul Reynolds, Stafford Critchlow and Cordula Zeidler on 2 November 2016 including a site visit, presentation from the design team followed by a question and answer session and deliberations at the offices of the London Borough of Islington. The views expressed below are a reflection of the Panel's discussions as an independent advisory body to the Council.

Panel's observations

Panel members were aware that this proposal is a live planning application and that it had gone to committee with officer's recommendation for approval. Committee had deferred a decision requesting that the scheme be first brought to the DRP.

Panel members accepted that one of the key issues raised by Council officers was the height of the building. The Panel generally felt that the proposed height was appropriate for the site and wider developing area which is characterised in townscape terms by undulation in height. The existing adjacent residential corner building to York Way is of low architectural quality and should not be seen as a precedent to follow. The Panel felt that provided the proposed design is of high quality and well-proportioned then an increase in scale could make a positive contribution to the street scene. There were, however, concerns raised regarding the sunlight and daylight impact on the residential building to the rear of the site, particularly in light of the recently approved additional windows to the north elevation of the residential building.

The Panel questioned how the subdivision of the office space would affect the cross-ventilation strategy. The design team stated that the ventilation would be a mix of natural and mechanical and that windows would be openable if required. However, panel members felt that further consideration was needed in order to provide sufficient natural cross ventilation through the building if subdivided.

The Panel questioned the height of the plant enclosures and whether or not these would project into the protected viewing corridor for St Paul's Cathedral. They commented that this should be clarified by the design team prior to possible approval.

Panel members supported the proposed industrial use for the ground floor unit and suggested that a requirement for this use was added to the consent to ensure an appropriate use of the space. They questioned the servicing required for this unit and were not convinced that the fully glazed ground floor would provide an appropriate solution for access into and out of the industrial unit. The Panel also questioned whether these units would be used as intended and were concerned that they may not provide the active frontage as envisioned. Better connections between the ground and lower ground floor should be provided. Panel members felt that careful consideration was required in order to provide an appropriate solution.

The Panel questioned the use of brick cladding and were concerned that this may result in a building that does not appear as robust, solid and industrial looking as intended by the design team. The ground floor glazing could have a more industrial character to better relate it to its intended use and the upper floor windows. Panel members felt that it was important that a high level of detail was submitted, as part of the condition discharge for materials, if the application is approved in order to ensure that a high quality finish is achieved.

Some panel members questioned the detail to the top of the building and felt it did not provide a good solution in terms of the proportions in relation to the base and middle of the building. It was suggested that the design team explore options where the top of the pilasters is dropped which may create a visually softer transition between the scale of the proposed building and that of others around it that are currently lower.

Summary

The Panel were supportive of the proposed use of the building, particularly the industrial use at lower levels. Panel members were also very positive about the intended robustness and industrial aesthetic of the building. They felt that further thought should be given to enhance the ground floor level and its relationship with the street, including the integrated design of the roller shutters, as well as further consideration to the access and loading for these units and how this may affect the glazing to the ground floor. The Panel also suggested that further work was required in relation to the cross ventilation of the building if the floors are subdivided into smaller units. As the building is taller than many around it, panel members felt it would be particularly important to ensure that full details of all materials and detailing to the approved design be carefully controlled by condition, particularly as this building is likely to set a standard for future developments in the area.

Thank you for consulting Islington's Design Review Panel. If there is any point that requires clarification please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to seek further advice from the Panel.

Confidentiality

Please note that since the scheme is at planning application stage, the views expressed in this letter may become public and will be taken into account by the council in the assessment of the proposal and determination of the application.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy', written in a cursive style.**Luciana Grave**

Design Review Panel Coordinator
Design & Conservation Team Manager