

## CONFIDENTIAL

ATT: Rosemarie Jenkins  
Housing & Adult Social Services  
Islington Council  
Northway House  
257 Upper Street  
London  
N1 1RU

Planning Service  
Planning and Development  
PO Box 333  
222 Upper Street  
London  
N1 1YA  
T 020 7527 2389  
F 020 7527 2731  
E [Luciana.grave@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Luciana.grave@islington.gov.uk)  
W [www.islington.gov.uk](http://www.islington.gov.uk)

Our ref: DRP/109

Date: 20 December 2016

Dear Leo Cunningham-Baily,

### **ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

**RE: Hathersage & Besant, Newington Green, London N1 (pre-application ref. Q2015/4128/MJR)**

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 2 December 2016 for a third review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for the retention of all buildings onsite and the erection of a series of new buildings to provide some 40 new dwellings across the estate. It is also proposed to deliver significant landscape improvements including courtyard gardens, new playspace, new entrances into the estate and an improved route through the estate (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 Dominic Papa (Chair), Lee Mallett, Neil Williamson, Simon Carne on 2 December 2016 including a presentation from the design team followed by a question and answer session and deliberations at the offices of the London Borough of Islington. There was no site visit as this was a third review. The views expressed below are a reflection of the Panel's discussions as an independent advisory body to the Council.

#### **Panel's observations**

The Panel were generally supportive of the extent of the scheme now proposed and the direction in which the proposals were progressing. Panel members welcomed the retention of Little Besant as a positive step. They considered the proposals for the mews houses to the rear of Big Besant required further development and that a number of areas need to be resolved with further development required. The Panel were concerned that delivery of all aspects would be a challenge. The Panel made the following comments.

#### Masterplan

The Panel welcomed the approach taken by the design team since the previous review and the direction in which the proposals were heading, but were concerned that if part of the application were to come in as an outline application, the full scheme may not be delivered. Panel members commented that currently the proposals seemed to encompass a landscape plan and morphology and that they needed a better understanding of how it would work as a

set of spaces. The Panel were concerned that the focus on the Besant site might mean that the Hathersage site might suffer or not be carried out at all. In particular a number of planning options for Hathersage were discussed but remain unresolved in terms of use, the retention of residential units, the impact of changes to the existing residents and the potential introduction of retail or workspace uses. The Panel considered that Block K would be too remote a location for ground floor retail. The impact of changes to levels and parking layouts will be critical aspects to be addressed across the site from the north facing frontage to Hathersage. The presentation was uncertain on a number of these aspects and needs to be developed in detail. It is important that these aspects are considered as part of one planning application.

#### Public/Private spaces

One of the key concerns raised by panel members at the previous review was the distribution and legibility of public, private and semi-private spaces and how they related to the proposed new buildings on the site. Significant progress had been made, but the Panel considered that further clarity was still required as to how these public and private spaces would function, particularly at the interface between different types of spaces, and the interface between living space within buildings and adjacent external space. Panel members felt the changes to the proposed new buildings and retention of Little Besant improved the relationship with the various outdoor spaces, but that further work was required. The Panel welcomed the increased size of the central outdoor space within the site and the commitment to providing a new publicly accessible through-route, although the details of how this will function particularly at the Mildmay Park end require further development.

#### Heights and massing

Panel members felt that there may be scope for more height to some buildings (Blocks C and B) in order to increase the number/size of units provided on the site and to make the proposals more efficient and better equipped to future proof the site. The Panel were supportive of the retention of Little Besant, and it was suggested that it could take an additional floor with potential benefits to existing occupants. The Panel encouraged the design team to look again at an increased provision of units within the proposals in order to maximise the site's capacity as much as possible.

Panel members commented on the mews houses behind Big Besant and felt that the architects should consider providing 2-storey houses focussed on a central courtyard space.

#### Materials and design

The Panel questioned the rationale behind the proposed cladding and suggested that the use of brick with different materials to the roof and areas of detail (balconies, porches, recessed entrances) may be more appropriate.

### **Summary**

The Panel felt that the scheme had made a number of positive moves and that the different spaces were now better defined. Improvements had been made to the key open space within the site. They felt that it would be best for the proposals to be submitted as one planning application, but acknowledged that this may slow the design team as there is still much to be resolved on the north Hathersage that would need to catch up with the proposals to the south Besant end before an application was submitted. The Panel felt that a better understanding of the typologies and how the spaces work was required. Plans with internal layouts at ground and first floor levels across the whole site would provide greater clarity to the design intentions (uses of rooms and their relationships to external private and public spaces). Panel members felt that further clarification of the edges and boundaries within the site was also required. The potential for future developments should continue to be considered at this stage.

The Panel felt that there was still scope to further develop the site in order to maximise numbers of new dwellings. Linkage of blocks G and A could be considered, which might also strengthen the entrance from Newington Green Road. Increased height should be explored in certain areas. The Panel appreciated that the scheme had had three reviews, and believed that the scheme demonstrated the positives of the process. It would be beneficial to have the final proposal presented, at least to the Chair, prior to an application being submitted.

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 pre-application stage, the advice contained in this letter is provided in confidence. However, should this scheme become the subject of a planning application, 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