

**APPENDIX 3:     DESIGN REVIEW PANEL RESPONSE LETTERS**

April 2019



## CONFIDENTIAL

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Our ref: Q2019/0809/DRP

Date: 25 April 2019

Dear Mr Dempster,

### ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

RE: Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery Street London WC1X 0JL

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 9 April 2019 for a first review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for the demolition of the existing building on the site and the erection of a part 3 part 5 storey (plus rooftop plant) building for B1(a) and affordable office space (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), Dorian Crone, Stuart Piercy, Tim Attwood and Lotta Nyman on 9 April 2019 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

The panel congratulated the design team on a succinct and relevant presentation of the emerging proposals. The panel welcomed the re-provision of office accommodation on the site and thought that, combined with a re-landscaping of the pavement and pedestrian area which closes Yardley Street from Margery Street, the relocated entrance position had the potential to be an appropriate location and rewarding space. They considered that the current scheme had maximised the site and there was an opportunity to be more neighbourly by lessening the height and massing through reconsidering the structural form. The panel was not persuaded that the proposal to have an air-conditioned building with no opening windows on the principal elevations was the right environmental approach nor did it lead to a suitably rich elevational expression.

#### Topography and Margery Street elevation

The panel considered that the façade to Margery Street took insufficient account of the topography and expressed concern with the way the building related to the ground plane and slope of the site. They considered that this long elevation lacked subtlety or differentiation with a relentless repetition of bay column and glazing which risked threatening and overwhelming the context. Reference was made to how the surroundings contained expressive and joyful

buildings with a more powerful horizontal layer which was often a rusticated base. They suggested a base plinth be explored and that subdivision and increasing the scale towards the bottom of the site could enrich its expression.

#### Yardley Street elevation and servicing

The panel was unconvinced by the Yardley Street elevation and thought that the design should respond more robustly to its practical functions. Whilst they considered that recycling and refuse servicing was best accommodated on this elevation, its current form and materiality was unrealistic and the required functionality could be expressed, perhaps with fretted ironwork gates. The panel considered that there was an opportunity to reconsider the alignment and form of the junction with the listed buildings. The proportion and rhythm of the façade also failed to respond positively to the neighbouring listed buildings through an unrepresentative scale. The brickwork had been reduced to a pilaster effect against overlarge fenestration and these proportions needed reconsideration.

#### Height, scale and massing

The panel considered that the massing at the top end of the building had too much impact on Wilmington Square and that the core position should shift lower down on the site. The panel was concerned by how the building would appear as a considerably significant development to the properties on Attneave Street and have too great an impact on daylight and sunlight considerations. As well as lowering the currently generous floor to floor heights, they recommended reconsidering the structure of the building since an alternative structure to steel could reduce heights and make the building more neighbourly. The use of internal columns could also facilitate subdivision of the floor space for more flexible lettable space.

#### Quality of facilities and integration of affordable workspace

The panel expressed concern about the location and quality of the affordable workspace and its lack of integration with the facilities of the rest of the building. The proposed route for the storage of bicycles needed simplification and the lack of an internal route from these facilities to the affordable workspace was considered a weakness. Internal servicing generally was underprovided with likely inadequacy of lavatory facilities.

#### Landscaping

The panel considered that the early engagement of a landscape architect would benefit the scheme and queried the need for private external amenity space given the proximity and quality of Wilmington Square gardens. The panel was enthusiastic about the potential interaction of the building with the pedestrianised section of Yardley Street and encouraged the developer team to engage with the owners of the land to ensure high quality re-landscaping of this area.

#### Energy and ventilation

A traditional air conditioning strategy was proposed and although an aspiration for the building to achieve BREEAM excellent was noted by the panel, they considered this was a missed opportunity to use natural cross ventilation. They felt that natural ventilation provided interesting clues to finessing the fenestration and greening the building. They recommended that the energy strategy be developed with that in mind.

#### **Summary**

The panel welcomed B1a office and affordable workspace on the site and was encouraged by the entrance location and potential for engagement with Yardley Street and Wilmington Square. The intentions for delivery servicing on Margery Street and waste and recycling on Wilmington Square were supported in principle. More work was required on the facades, particularly rhythm, proportion and subdivision and the relationship to ground plane. Rethinking the structure could lead to a more neighbourly massing and height and a reformulated energy strategy to a greener building with more engaging fenestration.

Thank you for consulting Islington's Design Review Panel. If there is any point which requires clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me and I shall 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.

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.

Yours sincerely,

**Rachel Godden**  
Design & Conservation Officer

August 2019



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Our ref: Q2019/2318/DRP

Date: 21 August 2019

Dear Mr Dempster,

### ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

RE: Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery Street London WC1X 0JL

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 7 August 2019 for a second review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for the demolition of the existing building on the site and the erection of a part 2 part 5 storey (plus rooftop plant) building for B1(a) and affordable office space (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), Dorian Crone, Tim Attwood and Lotta Nyman on 7 August 2019 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 board to the Council. This letter has been reviewed by the Panel members and the Chair, and is considered to be an accurate reflection of the discussion held.

#### Panel's observations

The panel welcomed the progression of the proposals in attempting to respond to the previous DRP comments. The design was considered to have moved on, however there are further comments which arise from the revised design. These are as follows:

#### Height, scale and massing

There are outstanding questions regarding the impact to daylight of neighbouring properties that need careful consideration and resolution. Notwithstanding this, the Panel are comfortable in principle with regards to the building shoulder height, however concerns/questions remain about the fourth floor and plant enclosure. The applicant should investigate options for reducing the fourth floor and plant room footprint and height.

The Panel welcome that the fourth floor has been pulled back from the north-east elevation, however the Panel still finds that the elevation onto Yardley Street and the view from further back, has too strong a close presence against the cube element. The Panel wondered whether further setback at fourth floor level, to remove the half-bay (two windows) overlap, would



improve the setting of the cube, and form a better relationship with the three components of Yardley Street, the cube and Margery Street. If a quantum issue arises, then subject to daylight considerations, the displaced volume could potentially go on to the south-west of the building. This could give a clearer balance to the Margery Street elevation and would help views from Wilmington Square.

The plant enclosure to the roof was still considered too large and it was felt that the drawings should clearly show materiality as the indicative light grey tone flattered the 3D mock-up drawings.

Further, the Panel also queried the structure of the building, in regards to floor to floor heights, as 3.63 metres was considered relatively tall in this context and that reduction could be achieved through introducing central columns and removing downstands. Although the Panel have no issues in particular on the proposed building shoulder height, this may be a solution to deal with the resultant height of the top floor plant enclosure.

#### Yardley Street elevation

The Panel considered that this elevation has improved, the proportions are more successful with the removal of the last corner bay. However, the Panel requested the design team look at the subtlety and detailing of the design of the Yardley Street elevation, to bring in abstract and referential elements to the building for example from the iron work balconettes at first floor level of the adjacent listed buildings.

The Panel encouraged that the affordable workspace entrance (if it is not part of the main lobby entrance) should not be separated from reception by the gated servicing access, and suggested that the entrances are flipped, and primacy given for the office entrance.

#### Margery Street elevation

The Panel considered that the Margery Street elevation, although improved, is still relentless and monotonous due to repetition. It was considered that the corners lacked strength and are currently quite weak, the 12m bays could be improved in expression with recessive elements to make the elevation more interesting.

It was considered that further work to the base of the building and how it meets the ground is required. This could be achieved through incised brickwork and more consistency in the size and stepping down of the windows.

The Panel considered the single sheet glazing of the fenestration inappropriate to the context. The site is not in an office only location and needs to acknowledge the scale and character of the residential surroundings. Having subdivision and opening elements would introduce detailing to the fenestration that would improve the scale and appearance of the building.

#### Cube Element

The Panel considered this element to be key in the overall success of the building's appearance. The Cube was considered to be quite large in scale and further consideration was needed to the detailing, and in particular how it contributes to the overall spatial quality of the building layout and function. It needs to be special, announce the entrance and not just general office floorspace. Opportunities exist to create special spaces within it at the focal part of the building. The Panel noted that bulkheads and structure would be visible, as would furniture, and highlighted the importance of resolving these details with the Local Planning Authority with detailed drawings and sections at this stage of the pre-application. The detailing of the Cube, including rainwater drainage, is vitally important to the success of the proposal and should be considered and resolved prior to planning decision rather than through post decision condition stage.

The Panel queried whether the concept of the glazed cube could be successfully achieved given critical necessary detailing and issues such as fire spread.

The Panel considered that a critical component to the entrance location and design is the accompanying public realm proposal and that the client and design team need to enter into serious and detailed discussions with the Local Planning Authority about the proposed landscaping to Yardley Street.

#### Affordable workspace

The Panel could potentially prefer a supplementary proposal which was not shown in the presentation, for an internal courtyard to the rear of the affordable workspace unit due to the unworkable proposed floor to ceiling glazing on the boundary with Council land. This would need to be provided to the Local Planning Authority for review. A shared reception was also preferred to ensure equality for an entrance shared by all.

#### Energy and ventilation

The Panel remained committed to the principle of natural cross ventilation to the building and noted that opening elements would improve the character and appearance of the building.

#### Summary

The chair concluded that moving forward the success of the proposal is fundamentally about resolution of the final massing along with the quality of the architectural modelling and detailing, with issues such as weathering, staining and longevity of materials being key. This together with the quality of the adjoining public realm particularly to Yardley Street and the building entrance will be critical to the success of the proposal. The application needs to contain this level of detailing and address these issues.

The panel would welcome the return of the proposal once revised.

#### **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,

Alex Bowring  
Design Review Panel Coordinator

October 2019



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Our ref: Q2019/2846/DRP

Date: 29 October 2019

Dear Mr Dempster,

**ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL**

**RE: Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery Street London WC1X 0JL**

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel meeting on 8 October 2019 for a third review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for the demolition of the existing building on site and the erection of a part 2 part 5 storey above basements (plus rooftop plant) building for B1(a) and affordable office space (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), Dorian Crone, Tim Attwood and Lotta Nyman on 8 October 2019 following presentation from the design team and by a question and answer session and deliberations at the offices of Ryder Architecture in London W1. The views expressed below are a reflection of the Panel's discussions as an independent advisory board to the Council. This letter has been reviewed by the Panel members and the Chair, and is considered to be an accurate reflection of the discussion held.

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

The Panel welcomed the design development of the proposals in attempting to respond to the previous DRP comments. Overall the Panel was appreciative of the scheme's progression and justification on decision making on the scheme's resulting design and appearance. The design was considered to have moved on, however there are further comments which arise from the revised design. These are as follows:

#### Height, scale and massing

The Panel considered that although justification had been given for not relocating the two eastern third floor bays to the western end of the building owing to daylight issues with the neighbour, the third floor still has a presence to the rear of the adjoining listed buildings, especially to the chimney stacks, within views from Wilmington Square and the appearance would be improved by the removal of these two bays.



### Yardley Street Elevation

The design progress to the elevation including the detail presented is positive, however, it lacks interest and articulation appearing somewhat bland and flat, and changes to the fenestration would help. Another mullion would add interest and detail to the fenestration on Yardley Street. The base to Yardley Street would benefit from appearing to be heavier as the pilasters currently do not sit on anything and the Panel consider a base would provide a stronger element than the proposed cills. The Panel also noted that the horizontal banding on the cube element does not align with the storey bands on the Yardley Street elevation.

### Margery Street elevation

The pilasters would benefit from visual weight and a generous cornice as they do not currently carry any parapet. In relation to the windows, the division to the glazing is eccentric and would be improved by having functionally opening windows with additional framing. The elevation would be given greater hierarchy and improved with a base across the rusticated basement. The Panel suggested that the resolution of the design of the 'top' and 'bottom' will necessarily inform each other. The removal of the glazed balustrading at roof level was welcomed.

In relation to the expression of both elevations, the Panel concluded by suggesting that there was an interesting narrative that could be told regarding the transition between Yardley Street, the cube and Margery Street which are currently too harsh on each other. Whereas the Yardley Street elevation could be reflective of the adjoining Georgian listed buildings, there was an opportunity to provide a transition to a more modern idiom to Margery Street via the Cube.

### Cube Element

The division into four glazing panels gives a visually static appearance and an uncomfortable duality. The Panel suggested that a subdivision into odd numbers, preferably five, would give the required verticality and be more dynamic. The Panel also suggested that there should be an exploration as to how rainwater is drained from the base of the Cube glazing and suggested this could be allowed to run off into the soft landscaping below in an interesting manner.

### Affordable workspace

The Panel were pleased that the affordable workspace entrance was now connected to the main lobby of the building.

### Ventilation

The Panel reiterated the need to build in an opportunity to have openable windows to both Yardley Street and Margery Street elevations, and where balconettes are provided the windows must open to avoid appearing meaningless.

### Summary

The Chair concluded that the Panel were appreciative overall of the revised scheme. The Chair encouraged the Applicant to pursue further work to create a fine piece of architecture and was pleased that the landscaping and new public realm is being negotiated with the Local Authority.

### 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,

Rachel Godden  
Design and Conservation Officer

March 2020

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Our ref: Q2020/0247/DRP

Date: 04 March 2020

Dear Mr Dempster,

**ISLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW PANEL – CHAIR'S REVIEW**

**RE: Edward Rudolf House, 69-85 Margery Street London WC1X 0JL**

Thank you for attending Islington's Design Review Panel – Chair Review meeting on 18 February 2020 for a fourth review of the above scheme. The proposed scheme under consideration is for demolition of the existing building and construction of a 5 storey building (plus roof top plant enclosure and further basement excavation to the existing basement/lower ground level), to provide for a total of 5,961sqm (GIA) of office floorspace (Use Class B1a), along with a new substation, cycle parking and changing facilities, refuse and recycling storage, hard and soft landscaping, and associated works (Application 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 Portsmouth (Chair) and Dorian Crone on 18 February 2020 following presentation from the design team and 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 board to the Council. This letter has been reviewed by the Panel members and the Chair, and is considered to be an accurate reflection of the discussion held.

**Panel's observations**

The Panel once again welcomed the progression of the proposals in attempting to respond to the previous DRP comments. Overall the Panel was appreciative of the scheme's progression and was a distinct improvement and the changes had been positive. However, there is work to be done on the challenges to scale, massing and the Margery Street elevation. These are as follows:

**Height, scale and massing**

The Panel considered that although the design team had sought to justify the lack of removal of the eastern third floor bays, the third floor is still noticeable in regard to its impact on views of the neighbouring listed building terrace from Wilmington Square. This is particularly seen in views K, L & M. Their removal would be part of increasing the clarity of expression of the new building, would distinguish the corner cube element and would improve the corner as a better relationship with the adjoining terrace. The Panel considered this would be a better response to the historic environment and would work better compositionally with the cube. The Panel considered that the relevant context was the immediate historic environment, rather than the emerging Mount

Pleasant development. The Chair also raised questions about the daylight and sunlight transgressions which could inform the overall height and scale.

#### Yardley Street Elevation

The Panel considered it was a missed opportunity not to have openable windows on this elevation and further encouraged the use of balconettes further towards Margery Street as the fenestration still causes duality within the elevation. However, the Chair liked the 'conversation' that is present in the fenestration as it transforms across the facades which is adding a layer of richness.

#### Margery Street elevation

The Panel considered there was an awkwardness in the even number of bays and felt that there was a weak termination at the junction with the building to the south, 86 Margery Street. There is still a sense of monotony to the elevation and a more solid and announced pilaster should be introduced to the end of the elevation adjoining 86 Margery Street. The cornice and the base of the elevation has been improved with the proposed rustication and the Panel encourage the use of an alternating A-B-A rhythm to the bays. The deeper the reveals to the windows the better in articulating the elevation. Nonetheless, there have been improvements through the use of rustication at the base and the pairing of the pilasters and use of a cornice. The Panel commented that they had consistently encouraged the use of openable windows within the context of a robust energy and ventilation scheme but noted that openable windows had not been provided.

#### Cube

The division of the cube glazing panels into five improves the appearance of the Cube and gives the required verticality. Further, the line of joints better responds to the rest of the building.

#### Materials

The Chair considered that materials would be very important in the success of the scheme. Softer handmade brick feel to the elevation is particularly important in Yardley Street. The joints and the technological approach needs to be carefully considered. Coloured CGI's will need to be produced to accurately represent and assess the proposals within their context.

#### Summary

In summary, the Chair said that there had been a distinct improvement since last time and the changes have been positive. The fenestration is adding a layer of interest. The massing height and scale needs to respond to the historic setting and consider how it turns the corner. Yardley Street is comfortable as the articulation is understood. There has been an improvement to the Cube with its jointing. However, there is work to be done on the challenges to Margery Street which is repetitive and in danger of monotony. The Chair remarked that the application would benefit from coloured perspective drawings showing the building in context.

#### Confidentiality

Please note that since the scheme is at application stage, the views 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,

Rachel Godden  
Design and Conservation Officer