

**Richmond
Design Review Panel
C/o Richmond Council**

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Our ref: ECS/
Your ref:
Date: 25 June 2019

Sarah Considine
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100 Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5NQ

Dear Sarah

Richmond Design Review Panel: House of Fraser, 80 George St, Richmond TW9 1HA

The Panel is grateful to you and your development team for participating in the Richmond Design Review Panel (RDRP) held on the 10 June 2019. We were able to visit the site and thanks the team for the clear and comprehensive presentation of the proposals for the alteration to the House of Fraser building in Richmond. This letter will remain confidential until a formal planning application has been submitted, whereupon it will appear alongside the information provided.

The proposals involve the following:

- External alterations: Erection of additional storey at fourth floor (with associated roof terrace) and plant room above; 2nd floor rear extension; single-storey extension to rear to partially enclose rear courtyard; enclosed staircase to rear; terraces to the rear; and associated plant. Other elevational alterations include; removal of canopy to 80 George Street; new shopfronts to 4 Paved Court, Golden Court entrance; and King Street and George Street frontages; New fenestration throughout; and new canopies.

The Panel's detailed comments are set out below:

The House of Fraser Department Store occupies a key site in Richmond Town Centre and acts as an anchor store in the retailing hierarchy. It represents a landmark at the junction of George Street and King Street. The store includes several listed buildings fronting on to Paved Court, a C17th century lane that forms part of the original historic street pattern.

Heritage and Setting

The building on 80 George Street, currently occupied by House of Fraser, is partially located within the Central Richmond Conservation Area (CA 17) and Richmond Green Conservation Area No. 3. The building, which dates from the 1960s, was designed by the architect Stanley Gordon Jeeves who according to the 20th Century Society 'was an eminent and prolific architect who collaborated on many landmark buildings in London, such as the National Radiator

Building, Berkeley Square House, the Earls Court Exhibition Centre and Dolphin Square. He was well known for being at the forefront in new technology.'

The building was referred to in the Central Richmond, Richmond Green and Richmond Riverside Conservation Area Study of 2001 as not having any architectural merit, although it featured in a character illustration in the same document: 'Unfortunately the view southwards is less inspiring, dominated by the Dickens and Jones building and the current Post Office. Both are bland and of poor design quality, and an unfortunate and unsuitable focus for the vista.' Nearly 20 years on the building is now regarded as a non-designated heritage asset within the conservation area and Richmond town centre where it is visible from a number of key views. We also recognise that the building has landmark quality and forms an important gateway to Richmond Town Centre.

The Panel is therefore highly supportive of the applicant's intention to give the building a new lease of life. However, we are clear that any alterations should be integral to, and in sympathy with the comprehensive original design of the building and its heritage setting, in particular when viewed from Richmond Green, views along Hill Street and various views in the town centre.

Roof extension and plant enclosure

The Panel generally has no objection to the proposed fourth floor extension to accommodate further office space, despite its considerable floorspace. Nonetheless the applicant should carefully consider the visual impact from various key viewpoints in the surrounding areas, especially when coming down from Hill Rise, along George Street and The Green.

We are however very concerned about the view from King Street and Richmond Green in relation to the additional plant enclosure on the roof. Of the proposed extension, we think this results in additional bulk and has a negative visual impact on the heritage setting. We strongly recommend integrating the plant in the fourth floor addition instead.

The proposed extension on the second floor, towards north, seems appropriate.

Elevations

The Panel considers 80 George Street a good quality building, and an undeniable heritage asset which could potentially be considered for statutory listing. Its design has a three-dimensional quality which is highly literate, and of classical proportions expressed through a glazed box with masonry elements at the base, a piano nobile and an attic, which has been left largely untouched over the years.

Whilst we support a more open and modern design for the façade, with larger and more enticing fenestration and reintroduction of mosaic details around the windows, not all Panel Members are comfortable with losing the canopy. This is considered to be an integral component of the elevation with a practical use and structural connection to the building, which can be seen in various other department stores of the time such as Simpson's in Piccadilly or Peter Jones in Sloane Square (both statutory listed).

The Panel appreciates the reasons to open up the base, creating a more street friendly and contemporary design, and we understand that retailers might see the canopy as an impediment. While this does not seem to be the case at the moment, and as the retail element will be most likely located on ground floor and basement, we suggest keeping the option open but question if the perception by retailers should be the only reason to lose this element. More light into the building could be achieved in other ways by removing the internal partitions which currently divide the shop floor from the large windows, and possibly creating some glazed openings in the canopy. The design approach should use existing ingredients.

The canopy is seen as very important, and inextricable component of the façade design to George Street and King Street giving these articulation and proportion. The majority of the Panel feel it should be retained as its loss would change the appearance and proportions of the original design. The proposed strong vertical emphasis of the fenestration pattern and stone sections running down through the upper floors to the ground, and loss of the strong horizontal canopy element which echoes the horizontal band of fenestration at the top of the building, would make the narrow column supports on the ground floor appear feeble underneath. Besides it would also lose an important structure that provides shade and shelter for pedestrians walking in the streets.

Entrances

The Panel supports the proposals for the Golden Court visitor entrance to the offices above. The double height glazing with its airy, light flooded atrium is a great improvement to the existing. We also support the introduction of a staff entrance on Paved Court as a way of bringing in more regular footfall to this quieter alley.

Materials and Detailing

The Panel feels that introducing, an upper floor to a suburban town setting such as Richmond, which in its detailing and materiality is more comfortable in an urban environment, is critical. We therefore encourage the teams to design this additional level as low key and simple as possible and use glass (possibly fritted as you suggested) rather than zinc to the rear facing the Green. At present we feel there are too many material treatments proposed which could be seen as too visually intrusive when viewed from a distance. We ask the applicants to be mindful about the light pollution from dusk till dawn and control this in the building's management system.

There is also a discrepancy between the fenestration pattern of the existing building and the proposed additional floor. The fenestration pattern of the new fourth floor therefore needs to line up with that of the existing floors below.

Given the building has not been much altered since it was built, we think the expressed vertical fenestration pattern and glazing system of solid and glass, with its projecting glazing bars on the upper floors should be retained, as in the existing building this provides a contrast to the expressed stonework.

In terms of detailing we fully support reintroducing the mosaic detailing around the fenestration. We are however not supportive of the contemporary flush option for the ground floor windows which we think would not provide enough contrast to the smooth masonry.

Conclusion

This is a very important building in the centre of Richmond, with four elevations at the heart of the town centre. It is a landmark building that has many qualities which is only now being revalued. The Panel is therefore fully supportive of the intention of giving this building a new lease of life.

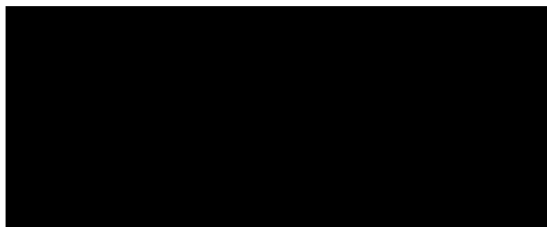
Whilst we are generally comfortable with the approach, we think careful consideration should be given to the visual impact the proposals for this building will have over the more fine-grained market and historic suburban town centre. Views from the hill around and from Richmond Green are crucial and therefore we do not support an additional plant enclosure on the rooftop which would read as too visually intrusive and raise further the skyline to this sensitive area.

The Panel support the proposed contemporary treatment to open up the building and give it a fresher and more modern appeal, particularly to the ground floor giving greater visibility of the interior to people. We are however not fully convinced about losing the canopy, which balances

the massing and vertical emphasis of the building. In order to retain the balance this element could be retained and adapted, affording more light into the building if necessary. External design should not be sacrificed for internal use.

Generally, the alterations to entrances on to Paved Court and Golden Court are acceptable overall.

Yours sincerely



Clive Chapman (Chair)
Clive Chapman Architects
Richmond Design Review Panel

Panel Members

Richard Woolf	McDaniel Woolf
Dorian Crone	Heritage and Design Consultant

Panel Secretary

Barry Sellers	Principal Planner, Wandsworth Council
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Panel Coordinator

Daniela Lucchese	Senior Urban Designer, Wandsworth Council
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LB Richmond Planning Team

Lucy Thatcher	Applications Manager
Simon Shub	Planning Officer
Nicolette Duckham	Senior Conservation Officer

LB Richmond Councillors (invited to observe)

Cllr Martin Elengorn
Cllr Peter Buckwell
Cllr Pamela Fleming
Cllr Bill Newton Dunn