

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Following the development of the design, a meeting was held with the Richmond Design Review Panel on the 7th September 2022. The panel put forward a number of comments related to enhancing the design, within a letter. The key points raised are below, together with the design team's response:

PARKING

Given the proximity of the site to Teddington Station (a few minutes' walk away) we encourage the team to challenge the number of car parking spaces. A reduction would enable a positive change to how the building sits within the context at ground floor level and adjacencies to the neighbouring properties.

In light of the panel's comments on reducing the parking numbers due to the site's accessibility to public transport and local amenities, the design team, client lettings team, and the Transport Consultants, TTP Consulting, have tested the impact of less spaces. This was in terms of impact to on-street parking, together with the marketability of the proposed apartments.

The result is a reduction to six car bays, with three for all the wheelchair units, three for all the family sized three-bedroom apartments, plus an additional delivery bay. All the spaces would be either active or passive charging, and additional considerations include a large quantity of secure cycle parking following London Plan guidance, whilst remaining residents would not be eligible for resident parking permits, in line with council policy.

Following the assessment of parking survey data, the Transport Consultants outlined there is a case for such a reduction, and the lettings team agreed with this approach. However, this will be subject to support from the Highways Department.

HEIGHT, MASSING & ROOFSCAPE

The Panel is broadly supportive of the design response for the scheme. The contemporary mansion block typology chosen for the building seems successful, but we feel the strong initial concept has been compromised through the various requirements and technical constraints. The Panel is not convinced of the form and massing of the roofscape. The extension of the brick lift shaft through the tiered roof is jarring and overall, this feels too complex with the double-step and slightly tall

in comparison with the adjoining properties. We think it could be rationalised and be more sculptural, simplicity is the key. We feel some earlier diagrams were more convincing.

The team have taken a step back to review the scheme, especially related to the comments made on the complexity of the roof form, the compromised veering away from the original concept, and the need to rationalise or simplify the massing towards an elegant sculptural design.

We have, therefore, removed the awkward top floor, bringing the building down to five storeys. Then the roof is rationalised with an even setback around the perimeter of the building, and squaring of the form. All the floor plans have been changed to simplify the envelope so that the expensive and complicated jutting-out oriels and protruding elements are eliminated. This includes the rear ground floor bays.

With these changes, the massing has returned to the original principle, whilst not losing the clarity and usability of the apartment internal layouts. It has, however, required the reduction in the number of dwellings from 30 units down to 27, but still with a policy compliant mix of family and wheelchair apartments.

CONTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP & MATERIALS

The Panel supports the choice of materiality based on the options tested, these show a good understanding of the site. We welcome the precedents considered, which have all a clear and strong concept.

Brickwork and roof detailing will be important, and we strongly encourage to give detailing much consideration.

We also encourage the team to find elements from the surrounding context to inform the design that will help create a high-quality building in this corner, rather than something that could be located anywhere.

In terms of relating the character of the new building to its local context, and especially Teddington and the road it is located on, the design team scoured the neighbourhood, looking for traits that expressed the nature of place. An historic

detail appeared, being a particular brick window surround to the original 19th century houses along Fairfax Road, with a contrasting colour of red rubber brick to the main gault walls, with stretcher, header and queen closer bricks.

With the efforts to simplify the envelope, the removal of the previous setback square reveals from the elevations seemed correct, as this approach has become the norm in contemporary blocks of flats across London, but not to Teddington.

Therefore, utilising the Fairfax window surround was deemed a more relevant detail, though the choice of coloured brick was changed from the red to a white, being a more subtle combination.

This has been implemented in the design together with some other brick banding details, that again promote the essence of a grand and contemporary 'mansion block'.

To help express the design approach, RHP have commissioned street view renderings of the proposal.

ENTRANCE, BINS/BIKE STORES & UNDERCROFT

Significant further work is needed on the arrangement and articulation of the ground floor particularly in terms of active frontages, waste storage, access, and proximity to the car parking.

The undercroft is not successful. Given the proximity to No.6 Cromwell Road, a Building of Townscape Merit, greater analysis is needed to ensure a better transition. This would help with tightening the footprint which seems very broad.

The team appreciate the DRP's comments on the position of the entrance, and frontal location of the bin/bike stores, plus the use of an undercroft.

With the entrance, the typology of mansion blocks often locates entrances along the main elevation, rather than junctions. In this case, the entrance is in the main body of the frontage, clearly discernible from the street. The angled building form then acts like a guiding wing, drawing people towards the entrance and heart of the building.

It is also noted that, the neighbouring property adjacent to the proposed undercroft, has no windows on the facing flank wall, that it is an existing garage that sits between the parking and the main body of the house, and that the parking has been reduced from ten bays to six.

OUTLOOK & LANDSCAPING

Consider reviewing the quality of accommodation for the ground floor and rear facing units in terms of both outlook and daylight provision. These have poor outlook onto the carpark and the bay overhang may compromise the provision of good quality natural lighting.

With the removal of the parking to the rear, has been one of the most dramatic improvements for the design. The rear wheelchair dwellings suddenly have an unfettered view to the communal gardens, together with all the apartments above, and the adjacent neighbours.

Following the recommendation of the panel, landscape architects have been appointed and are underway with a design. The approach is towards a blend a natural play, native woodland (shade) planting, small wetland area enhancing ecology, wildflower lawns and mounded landscaping, with terraces and seating for residents. The proposals will form part of the public consultation materials.

In placing the bins and bikes in the angled wing, is practical for arrival with bicycles and drop-off/collection for refuse.

If an apartment was positioned there, the occupants would be exposed to people entering the building, especially if the entrance was moved to the knuckle, and they would be surrounded with parking with no defensible/private outside space. Plus, the unit would be mainly north facing.

The removal of the undercroft has been considered, but on balance, the reclaiming of the frontage for an enhanced landscaped setting, and the useful screening of the reduced parking, whilst maintaining the sustainable density of affordable dwellings, all outweigh its loss.

4.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

On the 30th November 2022, a Public Consultation was held at RHPs offices, showcasing the current design proposals, as seen in the boards below. Leaflets were distributed around the neighbourhood and existing residents at the Sheldon House were consulted.

The turnout was fairly limited with less than 20 attendees. The overall comments

were supportive, especially regarding the look of the proposed building, the reduction of height, and the retention of the existing trees. Two existing Sheldon House tenants were extremely keen about returning to the new development, once completed, and this was documented by the RHP representatives.

Concerns raised were the level of parking, plus the possible disturbance during

construction. One Bolton Gardens resident was worried about overlooking to their garden, with another attendee concerned about the loss of the existing building.

