



Crouch End Neighbourhood Forum
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Comments by the Crouch End Neighbourhood Forum

LBH ref. HGY/2023/0832

Hornsey Town Hall, The Broadway, London N8 9JJ

Partial approval of details pursuant to condition 4 (Hard and Soft Landscaping), attached to planning permission HGY/2017/2220.

Dear Sam,

As the landscaping work at HTH is continuing but incomplete, we feel obliged to pass on some of the concerns raised by the local community. The public realm remains of high interest to Crouch End. The forthcoming re-opening of the front half of the Town Hall Square is particularly welcome.

We note that negotiations between applicant and planning are presumably well advanced – we would not want to add to any delay – and that this application is simply to fulfill planning conditions. Much of what follows has been raised previously, with planning, with the developer, and at the ongoing project Construction Steering Group.

The areas we wish to query are the furniture for Town Hall Square and the landscaping between HTH and Hornsey Library.

Town Hall Square

Much of the work identified is already complete. Nevertheless, –

- Lighting. We remain keen to see as much 1930s inspired lighting as possible, as was the original intention. The proposal to place the globe lamps just at the HTH entrances is a minimum – would

it be possible to place them outside the eastern annex too? We are happy to see the details of the repro lighting bollards.

- Commemorative red maple tree. The porous resin surface around the tree is not a success (too thin?) and looks set to deteriorate further. Is it possible to make the resin area smaller, deploy more paving, and perhaps employ a more decorative finish around the stem? (**see image (a) below from Marylebone*).

This and the deteriorating chestnut are raising concerns. Perhaps a review is necessary?

- Seating (**see image (b) below of Clement Danes*)
 - The bench seating is ample though there is insufficient seating with armrests. The provision of armrests would surely improve accessibility from a DDA perspective despite the poorly drafted Gov guidance on the matter?
 - We welcome the revised intention to extend the height to 450mm of the seating backrests where available.
 - The sharp leading edge of the bench seat slats will be uncomfortable – is it still possible to form a fillet or chamfer to the front to increase comfort?
 - The grassed area beneath the bench seating on the lawn side is already failing, and the access to the seats will become muddy in winter. Is a gravel edge to the lawn possible to allow year-round access?
- Fountain. Questions are raised regarding the clearance for larger vehicles turning around the fountain basin. Will the fountain be sufficiently protected?
- Cycle stands. Could a few cycle hoops be replaced with an area designated for e-cycle and e-scooter free parking? I note Haringey's recent intention to regularise such use.
- Bollards next to the Hatherley Gdns turning head. Are some the removable kind (to improve access for events, etc.)?
- Public Highway furniture – another plea to keep a close watch on the public highway as it fronts the TH Square:

This is a council issue rather than one contained within this planning app, however the clutter significantly impacts the design and importance of HTH square. NB. We note the statements regarding the heritage significance of the space submitted by the applicant featured in the Conservation Management Plan by Donald Insall (2023).

We would like to see a holistic approach to the entire plaza with most of the public highway furniture cleared, including superfluous seats, telephone kiosks and bins. The end result would give the Square and the TH itself greater prominence and legibility, increasing visitor footfall by improving movement, drawing people into the space. If the clutter remains in situ it would not simply be to the scheme's aesthetic detriment, but would present a physical barrier along the whole width of the Square – with insufficient clearance around the bus stop unwanted desire lines across the green and boundary planting may result.

Town Hall Gardens area

- Levels

The earlier application, HGY/2022/1382, indicated a proposed lower level at TH Gardens, and yet the drawings in /2023/0832 do not contain this revision and therefore landscaping and planting indications are presumably inaccurate. A definitive statement (and drawings) that detail the applicant's proposed landscaping in the area between HTH and Hornsey Library are required.

- Town Hall Gardens

- Have the various revisions to levels in the TH Gardens area been agreed? May we have correct drawings please?
- The planting for TH Gardens appears to be incomplete, eg. missing drawing L522?
- The tree cover is now unclear. We note what was originally proposed as an area of retained and new trees, 7 in total, may now comprise 2 retained ash and 2 new specimens in planters (4 in total) (as in planning app. /2022/1382). Does shade becomes an issue?
- Any info yet on whether the 'Community Use Plan' (s106) is available? I wonder whether it would contain details about the operation of TH Gardens?

- Gates. There are two potential security issues, –

- The main gate/fence line (gate 05) to the residential area (alongside the library) is partially composed of a planted hedge in modular planters as it adjoins the Library side-entrance porch. Is this sufficient?
- The gate (gate 03) between TH Gardens and the library fountain square does not seem to be included in this submission. In previously submitted drawings the gate appears easily climbable. Is this desirable?

Hornsey Library access

There are a number of access and servicing issues impacting the Library as a consequence of the HTH project. NB. We note that a separate landscaping project is currently underway for the Library concourse.

- As mentioned above, the various revisions to levels in the TH Gardens area and the retained planter for ash tree (drawing THG-XX-001, planning app. /2022/1382), means a redesign of the access lane (Greenside drawing GSL_P1_015, planning app. /2022/1382). Has this been agreed between the parties? Particularly the removal or repositioning of various walls. A correct GSL_P1_015 is urgently required for discussions with Hornsey Library.
- Is the access lane width (currently under construction) adequate for servicing and parking?
- Access lane parking bays marked 41-45 are the library-only parking spaces (as seen eg. C4 - 0001 Landscape Furniture Plan). They should not count toward the HTH vehicle provision. We note the identification of space 45 as disabled allocation.
- With most of the T-shaped turning head now removed (THG-XX-001 at /2022/1382), there appears to be insufficient space for vehicle turning at the end of the access lane. Vehicles will therefore have to reverse out, which may be a safety concern. Are there alternatives?

- Where will the Library bin store be located?
- It may be that the purpose-built Library loading bay is once again intended for use (this opens up onto FEC owned roadway) – if so, what size of vehicles can access the bay given the available road space between it and Block A?
- Has the integrity of the existing retaining wall behind the Library building been investigated?



Image (a): Example of a tree with a resin surround plus decorative element, etc. Marylebone.



Image (b): Accessible seating with armrests, backs, etc. These are simply fixed onto the seats. The Strand scheme near Clement Danes.

Regards,

Mark Afford

Chair, Crouch End Neighbourhood Forum