

London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Dyne House, Highgate School

Wednesday 2 February 2022
Highgate School, London, N6 4AY

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Georgios Askounis
Marie Burns
Stephen Davy

Attendees

Richard Truscott	London Borough of Haringey
Suzanne Kimman	London Borough of Haringey
John McRory	London Borough of Haringey
Elisabetta Tonazzi	London Borough of Haringey
Joe Brennan	Frame Projects
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Rob Krzyszowski	London Borough of Haringey
Robbie McNaugher	London Borough of Haringey
Tobias Finlayson	London Borough of Haringey

Confidentiality

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Haringey Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review.

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1. Project name and site address

Dyne House, Highgate School, North Road, London, N6 4AY

2. Presenting team

Jack Gregory	Hopkins Architects
Ed Toovey	Ed Toovey Architects
Chris Birkbeck	Highgate School
Stephen Freeth	Highgate School
Gwyn Jones	Highgate School
Daniel O'Connell	Highgate School
Simon Martini	Highgate School
Mike Derbyshire	Bidwells
Christian Milner	Bidwells
Fiona Williams	Bidwells
Adrian Holmes	Peter Deer and Associates
John Edmondson	Aecom
Danny Pattle	TB&A

3. Planning authority briefing

Dyne House falls within site allocation SA41 Highgate School which provides a policy basis for enhancement of the school facilities, while simultaneously benefitting local communities. As required by the site allocation, the Highgate School Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in 2021. This sets out the Council's ambitions for the site, including references to the open character of the Highgate Bowl, and requirements to protect Metropolitan Open Land.

Highgate School is within the Highgate Conservation Area and therefore development should preserve or enhance its character and appearance. With specific regard to Dyne House, the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (December 2013) states that:

"the continuous building frontage and relative unity is interrupted by Highgate School's Dyne House, a five storey and basement teaching building with auditorium, constructed in brick and concrete, designed in 1965/66 by Ansell & Bailey. The building is set back from the road at an angle, which provide the site with front car access and parking. Whilst it is good example of its time, the scale of the building does not reflect the established scale and character of the street."

The site is also within the area covered by the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2017, which has five core objectives relating to: social and community needs; economic activity; traffic and transport; open space and public realm; development and heritage. Planning officers asked for the panel's views on the emerging proposals, to inform the pre-application process.



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4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel finds much to admire in the emerging designs for Dyne House at Highgate School. It welcomes the decision to retain and remodel the existing structure, which is beneficial in terms of embodied carbon. It encourages the applicant team to develop a holistic sustainability strategy for all the buildings being redeveloped. This could, for example, address re-use of materials and sharing of heat, as well as future proofing the site for installation of more efficient heating systems such as heat pumps. The way in which the new buildings at Dyne House step down towards the Highgate Bowl, is a positive response to the topography of the site. The panel also supports the direction in which the architecture is developing, with a material palette of brick, stone and glass. It suggests adding greater depth and interest to the facades, to reflect the qualities of the conservation area, particularly for the front elevation. Landscape design is well-integrated with the architecture, including proposals for sedum, meadow and tree planting at roof level. While supportive of this approach, the panel questions if sufficient soil depth is achievable for roof top trees to be delivered. It also queries whether new tree planting in the parade ground is desirable, and suggests that maximising sunlight may be more important. Maintenance of the existing mature trees, beyond the site boundary, may be a better way to enhance the setting of the sports area.

Sustainability and low carbon design

- The decision to retain and remodel the structure of Dyne House provides a strong basis for the project's sustainability and low carbon design.
- Where partial demolition takes place, the panel would encourage careful thought about re-use of materials.
- A circular economy strategy that takes a holistic approach to the different buildings being redeveloped at Highgate School could maximise opportunities for material re-use.
- Similarly, there may be potential for a holistic energy strategy, exploring the re-use of waste heat.
- Although the school has a recently installed a gas heating system, the site should be future proofed for installation of more efficient systems such as heat pumps. Considering space requirements to allow this will be essential.
- The panel would encourage clear embodied carbon targets to be set as part of the planning submission.
- While a 35 per cent reduction in CO² emissions beyond Building Regulation requirements is proposed, the panel would encourage the team to aim for a more ambitious target.



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- The Department for Education's *School Output Specification Generic Design Brief (November 2021)* and *Technical Annex 2H: Energy* provide a useful benchmark for setting energy and sustainability targets.
- Both photovoltaic panels and biodiverse roofs are proposed, and achieving the ideal balance between these will need careful thought.
- As a general comment, the panel would encourage an approach that maximises biodiversity net gain.
- South facing glazed corridors risk overheating, and may benefit from greater solidity or shading.

Place-making, character and quality

- The designs for Dyne House step down towards the Highgate Bowl, responding positively to the topography of the site.
- The panel supports this approach, which is sympathetic to both the landscape and townscape character of Highgate.
- It welcomes the materiality of brick, stone and glass, but would encourage further refinement of the front elevation. The stone fins appear slightly flimsy, and the stone cladding of the lift tower seems rather flat.
- Although the panel understands that the solidity of the lift is a response to concerns raised by neighbours, it asks the design team to revisit opportunities for more openings, depth, texture, and interest in the lift tower.
- The panel also asks for careful thought about the junctions between different materials, for example where the stone lift tower meets the brick side elevation.
- The panel has every confidence in the skills of the design team to enrich the architecture, adding depth and interest that reflects the qualities of the conservation area.

Landscape design

- Landscape proposals for Dyne House include improvements to the parade ground, and a sequence of spaces both at grade and roof level, as the building steps down the site.
- This integration of building and landscape is welcomed, and the panel offers some comments on how this approach could evolve.
- The panel questions the realism of the trees shown at roof level above the seminar rooms and electronic diary. Although potentially an attractive feature, sufficient soil depth may not be achievable.



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- The parade ground is surrounded by mature trees, which may benefit from maintenance to improve their health and appearance. Although they are outside the site boundary, the panel would encourage the school to offer to undertake this work as part of the project.
- The panel also questions whether additional tree planting in the parade ground is desirable, considering the extent of existing trees. For students to enjoy this space, maximising sunlight may be more important and new trees will increase shade.
- Sustainable urban drainage will be an important aspect of the landscape designs. Technical studies will be needed to ensure the feasibility of the drainage plans on this steeply sloping site.
- More detailed landscape designs should be provided as part of the planning submission, to address the issues above and give confidence in deliverability.
- Similarly, ongoing landscape management and maintenance will be important to the success of Dyne House. This could be described in the planning application.

Inclusive design

- Improved accessibility is a key benefit of the plans for Dyne House, addressing the challenges of existing buildings and the site topography.

Next steps

The panel is confident that the applicant team will be able to address its comments, in consultation with planning officers.



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Appendix: Haringey Development Management DPD

Policy DM1: Delivering high quality design

Haringey Development Charter

- A All new development and changes of use must achieve a high standard of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. The Council will support design-led development proposals which meet the following criteria:
- a Relate positively to neighbouring structures, new or old, to create a harmonious whole;
 - b Make a positive contribution to a place, improving the character and quality of an area;
 - c Confidently address feedback from local consultation;
 - d Demonstrate how the quality of the development will be secured when it is built; and
 - e Are inclusive and incorporate sustainable design and construction principles.

Design Standards

Character of development

- B Development proposals should relate positively to their locality, having regard to:
- a Building heights;
 - b Form, scale & massing prevailing around the site;
 - c Urban grain, and the framework of routes and spaces connecting locally and more widely;
 - d Maintaining a sense of enclosure and, where appropriate, following existing building lines;
 - e Rhythm of any neighbouring or local regular plot and building widths;
 - f Active, lively frontages to the public realm; and
 - g Distinctive local architectural styles, detailing and materials.

