

Appendix 4: Quality Review Panel Report

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London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Broad Lane Car Wash Site

Wednesday 15 November 2023
AH Level 8, Collaborative Space, Alexandra House, 10 Station Road,
London N22 7TY

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)
Alberto Campagnoli
Alan Shingler
Catrina Stewart
Neha Tayal

Attendees

Sarah Madondo	London Borough of Haringey
Tania Skelli	London Borough of Haringey
Jacob Sturdy	London Borough of Haringey
Richard Truscott	London Borough of Haringey
Kirsty McMullan	Frame Projects
Bonnie Russell	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Suzanne Kimman	London Borough of Haringey
Rob Krzyszowski	London Borough of Haringey
Robbie McNaugher	London Borough of Haringey
John McRory	London Borough of Haringey
Emily Read	London Borough of Haringey
Elizabetta Tonazzi	London Borough of Haringey
Bryce Tudball	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.

Report of Formal Review Meeting
15 November 2023
HQRP140_Broad Lane Car Wash Site

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1. Project name and site address

Former Car Wash Land on the East Side of Broad Lane, London N15 4DE
HGY/2016/2232 (approved 24/3/2017)

2. Presenting team

Mark Smith	Mark Smith Architects Ltd
Mandip Sahota	NTA Planning

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is a former open-air car wash. It sits on the east side of Broad Lane and has had no buildings on it for over 20 years. Broad Lane is an important arterial road, connecting Tottenham Hale and Tottenham High Road at Seven Sisters. The site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6a. It is not a controlled parking zone or in a conservation area. The road to the north of the site is private.

The site's immediate neighbour to the north is the Fountayne Business Park, a small close of two storey office buildings. Esin Court, a terrace of 11 two-storey houses built in the 1990s but imitating Victorian terraces, is located immediately to the south. The opposite (western) side of Broad Lane is residential, containing a mixture of two storey Victorian terraced houses and early 21st century three and four-storey blocks of flats. The site is within the South Tottenham Industrial Estate, a designated Locally Significant Employment Site.

There have been two previous applications by a previous owner and different architects; HGY/2014/1114 (withdrawn) and HGY/2016/2232 (approved 24/3/2017). The latter was for 'demolition of the existing car wash, construction of a new office block including, covered bin, cycle's store and parking'. This proposal seeks to expand on the extant approval with 5,610 square metres of new office space in a four to nine-storey building.

Officers support the principle of development, as it would provide commercial office space in an employment area. However, officers have concerns that they would like to hear the panel's views on, including:

- Height and massing (in relation to the future context and in the absence of both a site allocation and an approved wider masterplan).
- Extent of building footprint and lack of public realm and active frontages.
- Master planning to show how this site can contribute to gradual redevelopment of the South Tottenham Industrial Estate, including a greater permeability of street network and provision of open space.
- Appropriate workspaces for maker space and creative industries.
- Lack of parking provision, including disabled and cycle parking, and reliance on public highway and other landowners' private roadways.
- Servicing and Blue Badge parking provision.
- Attractive architecture and active frontages.



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4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel welcomes the redevelopment of this underutilised site for workspace, but cannot support the scheme as it stands. The proposals represent an improvement on the extant planning consent for the site, but further work is needed to raise the standard of design.

The London Borough of Haringey aims to develop the South Tottenham Industrial Estate, but an approved masterplan is not yet in place. The panel encourages the council to develop this as soon as possible to provide guidance for project teams, allowing sites to come forward and future proofing designs. In the absence of a masterplan, the panel advises a more cautious approach to the site. This must include a more sensitive response to the existing context. The panel thinks that both height and massing are excessive. Both should be reduced if the building is to integrate with its setting, creating a successful transition in scale from the two-storey houses of Esin Court and reducing its impact in views along Broad Lane. The panel is also concerned about the inward-looking nature of the scheme.

The architectural language is elegant but makes no attempt to create a dialogue with the public realm. The building footprint should be reduced to make space for self-sufficient servicing arrangements, adequate Blue Badge parking and a more positive relationship with the street. Further work is needed to develop proposals for the way the building will be occupied, with the internal layout and floor-to-ceiling heights enabling these uses. This will allow the building to host a greater range of businesses, including creative makers, and will help to maintain the unique character of the South Tottenham Industrial Estate. The panel also encourages the project team to provide windows on the blank façades and integrate amenity spaces to create working environments that are better for employee health and well-being.

Masterplan integration

- The panel encourages the London Borough of Haringey to begin discussions with landowners to develop a masterplan for the wider area as soon as possible. This will set clear ambitions for the long-term redevelopment of the South Tottenham Industrial Estate, including a strategy for how the lack of street network permeability and open space should be addressed.
- The panel suggests carrying out desktop surveys of the neighbouring sites to ensure that there are no underground services that would interfere with the possible location of a new north-south road connection as part of the masterplan.
- The project team would be advised to wait for this masterplan to be developed and approved so it can develop the site with more certainty about how it should integrate with its context. However, if the project team wishes to proceed without waiting, the panel suggests a more cautious approach.



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- In the interim, it would be more sensitive to treat this as an urban infill site leaving provision for development of the other sites around it (apart from Esin Court), rather than building up to the site boundaries.
- While this scheme is a clear improvement on the extant consent, it should also be recognised that the footprint of the previous scheme was acceptable because the scheme was much lower in height and had a smaller massing than this proposal.
- While it is currently difficult to know if any neighbouring development will come forward to the south of the site, it is unacceptable not to provide windows on this elevation.

Height and massing

- While the nine-storey element to the east of the site is proportionally elegant, its height is not appropriate in this location. It appears to be driven by rentable internal floor area, rather than by the rigorous analysis needed to ensure it sits comfortably in its existing surroundings.
- The town centre heights highlighted by the project team are from too great a distance to provide relevant townscape context. The nearby Archives building should also not be taken as a datum level for this scheme, as it sits in a very different setting by the railway line surrounded by buildings of up to two storeys. The panel recommends that a height of five or six storeys for the tallest block, depending on internal floor-to-ceiling levels, as a more reasonable scale.
- The five-storey element on the west part of the site feels overbearing next to the two-storey houses of Esin Court, particularly in the views looking north along Broad Lane and when seen in elevation from the other side of the street.
- This development should be more sensitive to Esin Court as it is the only fixed height in the area. Other approaches can be used to create a sense of prominence on the corner. A block three storeys high with a further setback storey would create a more successful transition in scale from the houses.
- The panel is not convinced by the proposed massing. The top floor of the corner block is not set back far enough to lessen its impact, and the massing creates a prominent gable end in views north along Broad Lane.
- The idea of breaking the building down into stepped blocks is a positive response to the context, but building on the entire site footprint will create too much bulk on the site. The panel suggests adjusting the massing to address its other comments below and testing this again in townscape views.
- The height and massing are also determined both by the internal floor-to-ceiling heights and the locations of cores. While the panel understands the



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desire to keep the overall building height to a minimum, the current internal head heights are too domestic in scale and should be increased.

- Floor-to-ceiling heights and core locations should also be determined by further thinking on how the workspaces will be occupied, to ensure the building meets the needs of its intended uses by providing appropriately designed space.
- More thinking is also needed on the journey the building's occupants will take to reach the ground floor amenity space, to ensure it is accessible.

Public realm

- The panel is concerned that this scheme is overly reliant on the private road to the north for all its servicing requirements, including Blue Badge parking, refuse and deliveries. This road is outside the site boundary, beyond the project team's control, and could become an adopted highway in the future.
- The panel recommends that the building footprint is reduced to create the space to ensure the development is self-sufficient in terms of servicing, and to offer a more realistic amount of Blue Badge parking.
- The ownership boundary 'red line' on all plan drawings should be checked to ensure it is accurate. This has caused confusion over whether the new pavement to the northern edge will be within the site boundary or will encroach on, and therefore narrow, the private road.
- The panel asks the project team to create a more positive street-level experience for those passing by that offers more to the wider community. The building's footprint should be reduced to create more public realm and to provide space for public benefits such as trees and on-street cycle parking.
- The building's relationship to the street should also be developed through its frontages. The ground floor storey should be architecturally distinguishable from the others and should help to activate the street, perhaps through materiality and glazing size.
- The building entrances should be intuitively legible without the need for signage. Flexibility should also be built in to accommodate multiple entrances if needed, to allow the subdivision of business space.

Workspace

- Although the large open plan floors could be subdivided to suit various sizes of business, the panel is not convinced that the internal servicing strategy has been worked through. There should be careful consideration of where cores are located and how the building is managed. This will ensure that services such as refuse collection will work for all units on all floors.

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- The workspace offer does not embrace contemporary attitudes to business needs. The low floor-to-ceiling heights and absence of outdoor amenity space or break-out areas all indicate a lack of consideration for the health and wellbeing of employees. This should be addressed.
- The layout suggests that this proposal would only suit traditional office-based businesses. A unique community of creative and independent businesses has established itself in this area. It is crucial that this scheme caters to their needs, safeguarding their future here. As a starting point, the panel would like to see more spacious internal head heights and ground floor space for a working yard, perhaps to the south of the site.

Amenity space

- At present, there is no external amenity provision for the occupants of this building. The green roofs are not accessible, and the setback fourth floor shown in the perspective views is not matched in the plans.
- In the panel's view, it is not acceptable to provide office space for approximately 500 people with no space for respite, especially considering the low internal head heights.
- Outdoor amenity space would improve the health and wellbeing of the people working here and is an attractive commercial offer. As well as being social spaces, terraces could also support the ideas around flexible working.
- Overlooking private gardens at Esin Court could be avoided by creating terraces along the northern and western edges of the building. The project team is also encouraged to adjust the massing of the taller block, to enable south-facing amenity space provision located away from Esin Court.

Inclusive and sustainable design

- The panel welcomes the thinking that has gone into developing target energy consumption data.
- The southern and eastern elevations of the taller block have no aspect. While the panel recognises the efforts to detail this façade so that it is not entirely blank, it is unusual to have no windows when neither of these elevations have a traditional party wall relationship with their surroundings. As well as creating a higher quality internal work environment, windows are important for natural surveillance and should be added where possible.
- Considering the relatively narrow floorplates, the panel recommends that natural ventilation is integrated into the design. It may be that some assisted cooling is required in the summer, but cross ventilation could be achieved, especially if windows are added to the blank façades and the massing is set back to create amenity spaces.



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Architecture

- Overall, the contemporary approach, materials and proportions of the elevation designs are successful. The taller block is especially elegant. The façades fronting Broad Lane are less successful due to the domestic scale windows at third floor, which are out of keeping with the industrial aesthetic.
- However, the panel encourages the project team to explore how the industrial aesthetic can be made to feel less heavy and bland, especially on the Broad Lane elevation. The panel advises developing the architectural character to bring the surrounding context into the design. The introduction of another material or colour would help to reference the diverse character of the South Tottenham Industrial Estate.
- The panel enjoys the approach of subdividing the elevations to look like three separate buildings, which helps the proposal to feel less bulky.
- The architecture could be improved by using setbacks in the façades to create more distinction between the three elements, further reducing the sense of scale and building in opportunities for amenity space. This approach should also be applied in plan by articulation the building's footprint rather than building up to the site boundary.

Next steps

The panel is available to review the proposals again, once the applicant has had the opportunity to respond to its comments.



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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.