

Design Officer Comments

HGY/2023/2584

13 Bedford Road Alexandra Park London N22 7AU

Demolition of the existing building and the erection of a new mixed-use development up to five storeys high with commercial uses (Use Class E) at ground level, 12no. self-contained flats (Use Class C3) to upper levels and plant room at basement level. Provision of cycle parking, refuse, recycling and storage. Lift overrun, plant enclosure and PV panels at roof level.

Applicant: Mr A Christodoulou

Agent: MR Chris Georgiou

Context

1. The site is located to the east of Alexandra Palace Park, at the junction of Bedford Road and Alexandra Park Road, and in proximity to Alexandra Palace train station. Positioned within a predominantly residential area, the site sits adjacent to the local high street along Palace Gates Road and has access to a variety of public amenities. These include woodlands, parks, and playing fields which are all within walking distance.
2. This brownfield windfall site is currently used by a car repair business. The site is partially occupied by a two-storey building with a glazed ground-floor frontage and an area of hardstanding used for car parking along Bedford Road. Due to the sloping topography, the building appears as a single-storey structure when viewed from Alexandra Park Road. Architecturally, the building is of limited merit.
3. The site benefits from high visibility, being located near one of the main entrances to Alexandra Park. It is visible from three key directions, including the pedestrian and vehicular bridges that cross the railway lines, as well as from the conservation area situated beyond the tracks. Additionally, the rear of the site is visible from the elevated section of Alexandra Park Road, where the terrain slopes downward toward the property.
4. The surrounding urban fabric is typologically diverse, with no single architectural style dominating the area. The neighbourhood features a mix of Interwar domestic architecture, Edwardian homes, and contemporary developments. To the north of the site stands a four-storey mansion block, while to the south, along Bedford Road, is a row of two-storey Edwardian houses. Immediately west of the site, fronting Alexandra Park Road, is a car park and a two-storey purpose-built block of flats. Further west, the area is primarily composed of two-storey semi-detached houses.

Height, Form, Bulk, Massing & Layout

5. The proposal comprises a five-storey residential mansion block (Use Class C3) with a recessed top floor and two commercial units at ground level (Use Class E). These commercial units have flexible layouts to accommodate a variety of uses and feature generous shopfronts designed to activate the street frontage. The mixed-use scheme therefore transforms an underutilised local town centre site, integrating it more effectively with its surrounding context. The design has evolved through multiple iterations, incorporating feedback from both the Quality Review Panel (QRP)

and planning officers, resulting in improvements to massing, architectural expression, and detailing.

6. The proposed building is approximately one storey taller than the adjacent properties at 8–10 Bedford Road (to the north) and 357 Alexandra Park Road (to the east). However, the height is considered appropriate given the site's high accessibility and proximity to local amenities and services. Based on the ambitions of Haringey's local plan - new developments may rise proportionately above the prevailing heights to facilitate housing delivery in the borough. Additionally, the top floor is recessed by a minimum of 2.2 metres from the north, east, and south elevations and is clad in grey powder-coated aluminium, which scale down its bulk and appearance.
7. The building's height is not considered intrusive, even in long-range views from Bridge Road and Buckingham Road across the railway line as the streetscape along Bedford Road gradually and consistently steps up from the corner of Bedford Road and Palace Gates Road. Reasonably reflecting the rising land along the street. This gradual increase in height is exhibited by 8-10 Bedford Road over 7 Bedford Road and by 7 Bedford Road over its neighbour to its north. In this context, the proposed one-storey increase over 8–10 Bedford Road is consistent with the established rhythm and scale of the street.
8. Along Bedford Road, the proposed footprint aligns with the building line of the adjacent property to the north, completing the urban block. On Alexandra Park Road, the footprint extends to the site boundary, diverging from the prevailing 10-metre setback. This is however, considered an appropriate and deliberate response to the site's corner location, as it allows the building to assert its presence and contribute positively to the streetscape
9. Further, the southern corner of the building, at the junction of Bedford Road and Alexandra Park Road is articulated through a series of stepped-back balconies. These cascading balconies provide a visual transition and help to mediate from the level elevation along Bedford Road to a more dynamic elevation on Alexandra Park Road which is primarily a residential street with terraced housing. Overall, the proposed height, form, bulk, massing and layout conforms well to the established character, and acts as a highly compatible neighbour to adjoining sites.

Elevational Composition, Fenestration and Materiality

10. The main elevational composition consideration is with the Bedford Road and Alexandra Park Road Street frontage, as is expected from such a frontage-oriented development. The Bedford Road frontage is articulated into four vertical bays, following the established rhythm and scale of the neighbouring buildings. Proposed to be built in red brick, the bays are subtly differentiated through minor tugs of the building line and by varying the mortar pointing. Window and balcony sizes remain consistent across all levels and façades, reflecting the contemporary layouts and uniform residential hierarchy of the proposal. The elevation design has been significantly refined in response to the QRP's feedback, particularly through the simplification of the material palette.
11. A shopfront fascia band runs along the Bedford Road frontage, visually separating the base from the upper levels and echoing the composition pattern of the adjoining properties to the north. The bottom of the proposed fascia aligns with that of 8-10 Bedford Road, while the top aligns with the existing cornice. An aluminium canopy projects beyond the shop front fascia, highlighting the residential entrance and the warm materials, planters and integrated lighting, clearly distinguish it from the other access ways. Store risers reinforce the building's base, yet level access and permeability are maintained in residential, commercial and service areas. As is practice the final

shopfront details and levels will be secured through planning conditions to ensure responsiveness to context.

12. Passive solar protection is provided on the east elevation through horizontal aluminium brise-soleils, mitigating overheating. The south elevation benefits from the stepped form factor of the architecture.
13. Whilst the rear of the block is visible, especially from the slope along Alexandra Park Road, the main driver in the composition of the rear elevation is its impact on the privacy of the neighbouring plot. It therefore has expansive blank walls, and projecting brick headers have been incorporated, into its design to add visual interest and texture. The west elevation is framed by residential units and features a centrally located lift core. A recessed light well with communal access decks and small bathroom and bedroom window openings. The light well is screened to the west by a green wall, which also serves as a privacy barrier.
14. Outdoor amenity space is provided through a variety of balcony types: inset balconies on the east façade, cascading balconies on the south, and projecting balconies on the west. Along the east and south façades, balcony parapets are composed of short brick walls topped with metal balustrades. These brick elements conceal drainage and soffit services while maintaining a minimal profile. The metal balustrades above provide openness and visual relief. Balconies on the west are equipped with 1.8m high privacy screens on both sides to prevent overlooking and ensure resident privacy.
15. The material palette is brick-led, carefully selected to harmonize with the surrounding context and reflect the character of the area. The façades primarily feature red brickwork, complemented by grey powder-coated aluminium windows and doors. While the specific brick type will be confirmed via condition, the proposed approach is considered appropriate and likely to be visually appealing. Metalwork is used extensively across doors, window frames, shopfront fascias, balustrades, and handrails, all in grey. Additionally, obscured glass privacy screens will be installed between flats and balconies to maintain privacy for future residents.

Requested Conditions and Informatives

16. Design refinements were requested at QRP, and more generally the feedback was constructive. Although the QRP has asked for a further review we feel confident that it was not be needed.
17. Notwithstanding the overall design quality of this proposal, a small number of conditions and/or informatives are requested, to safeguard design quality, make up for shortcomings in the application documents and allow the full potential of the site and its neighbours to contribute to the Council's Placemaking Objectives:
 - Entrances – The residential entrance design should be detailed further with considerations for materiality and texture in the external and internal spaces as they will be experienced every day at proximity. The details for the residential, commercial and service entrances must be conditioned.
 - Landscaping : to be detailed in drawings submitted for condition (otherwise in accordance with standard landscaping conditions).
 - Green Wall – Pending the appointment of a landscape architect we must condition the Design, Installation, Maintenance, Security and Fire Risk assessment

- Green Roofs – The green roofs on the first, fourth and roof level improve the site’s biodiversity, air quality and generate energy through PV panels. However, pending the appointment of a landscape architect the Design, Installation and Maintenance of the proposed green roofs will have to be conditioned.
- Balconies - The cascading southern balconies have green parapets which maybe fitted with built in or clip on planter boxes. In either case we must request the detailed drawings of the balconies showing the drainage and soffit details to prevent faulty design which may leave water marks on the facade. We could perhaps request a mock-up should we be not entirely convinced by the drawings. Similarly, the details showing the privacy screens, balustrade and finishes for the inset and projecting balconies should be conditioned.
- Materials – samples of brick work including mortar, pointing and parapet, decorative brickwork, sample of setback material at roof level and parapet, window and window frame, soffit, balustrades, external rainwater pipes and goods, sun shading elements.
- Levels – level access to the commercial units and residential entrance. Shopfront of the new build should align with the shop front of the adjoining building to the north. Also, the brick parapet of the new structure should be level with the ridge line of the adjoining building to the north.
- Shop Front Design – Detailed design of shopfront given its flexible Class E use and not finalised at the time of application. Also, all the standard shopfront advertising contents.
- Detailed window, incorporating openings, ventilation, fall prevention requirements, to be designed and coordinated to maintain an elegant overall elevational appearance with the designed proportions.

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