

Appendix 4: QRP Report

Haringey Quality Review Panel

Report of Chair's Review Meeting: Cross House

Wednesday 17 March 2021

Video conference

Panel

Peter Studdert (chair)

Wen Quek

Attendees

John McRory	London Borough of Haringey
Richard Truscott	London Borough of Haringey
Valerie Okeiyi	London Borough of Haringey
Elisabetta Tonazzi	London Borough of Haringey
Katerina Koukouthaki	London Borough of Haringey
Sarah Carmona	Frame Projects
Kyriaki Ageridou	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Rob Krzyszowski	London Borough of Haringey
Dean Hermitage	London Borough of Haringey
Robbie McNaugher	London Borough of Haringey
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Confidentiality

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.

1. Project name and site address

Cross House, Cross Lane, Hornsey, N8 7SA
Planning application reference: HGY/2021/0428

2. Presenting team

Paul Osborne	GML Architects
Nick Makasis	GML Architects

3. Aims of the Quality Review Panel meeting

The Quality Review Panel provides impartial and objective advice from a diverse range of experienced practitioners. This report draws together the panel's advice and is not intended to be a minute of the proceedings. It is intended that the panel's advice may assist the development management team in negotiating design improvements where appropriate and in addition may support decision-making by the Planning Committee, in order to secure the highest possible quality of development.

4. Planning authority briefing

The site, which forms part of the Cross Lane Industrial Estate, is located to the north of Pool Motors where planning permission was granted by the planning sub-committee (HGY/2020/17240) for a five to six storey mixed use development. The subject site is located to the south of Smithfield Yard which is currently under construction and ranges from five to seven storeys in height. To the west of the site is Smithfield Square (former Hornsey depot) ranging from four to eight storeys in height. New River Village is to the east and north of the site ranging from three to eight storeys and to the south of the site are the listed buildings at 69 - 71 Hornsey High Street. To the east of the site is the former pumping station which is locally listed. The site comprises a two-storey rectangular shaped brick building with some hardstanding for vehicle parking known as Cross House. Access to the site is from Cross Lane, which leads to Hornsey High Street to the south. Pedestrians and cyclists can access New River Avenue to the north. The site has a PTAL level of 3, which is ranked as 'medium' access to public transport service.

The site adjoins the Hornsey Water Works and Filter Beds Conservation Area to the south and is in close proximity to the Hornsey High Street Conservation Area which is further south. The site forms part of site allocation SA47 in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, which identifies this part of the site as suitable for an employment-led mixed used development with residential. The current proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 815sqm of commercial floorspace business (Class E(g)(iii)) use at ground, first and second floors and nine residential units above. Officers sought the panel's view on the overall design quality of the proposals, including the scale, massing, materiality and potential impact on the setting of the conservation areas and nearby listed buildings.



5. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The Quality Review Panel welcomes the opportunity to consider the proposals for Cross House. The design team's passion for the area was evident within the comprehensive presentation and has clearly informed the evolution of the proposals. The panel will be pleased to see the final site within the site allocation at Cross Lane (SA47) completed.

The panel supports many of the key decisions taken within the design process so far and feels that the scale of the development is appropriate to the emerging context. The main area of concern is the front elevation, where the three-dimensional profile of the overall building envelope and location of commercial accommodation at second floor level is at odds with the established context and presents a dissonant architectural language from first floor upwards. If this configuration of uses and three-dimensional profile is retained, further work on the architectural expression is required, to bring coherence and a more appropriate proportion and visual hierarchy to the elevation.

Scope for further improvement also remains within the scheme layout, especially in terms of the generosity and flexibility of circulation spaces, the residential accommodation and the main residential entrance. The landscaped area to the front of the scheme would also benefit from further consideration.

While noting that the applicant's preferred balance between quantum of commercial and residential accommodation is regrettable, the panel thinks that subject to resolution of the other issues highlighted below, it would offer its support for the project. Further details on the panel's views are provided below.

Massing and configuration

- In broad terms, the scale and overall height of the proposal is appropriate for the emerging context of Cross Lane. Cross Lane itself is a very special place, with entry underneath a characterful overhead sign. The panel feels it will be important to keep an intimate scale at pedestrian level, while opening up – and stepping back – the upper floors of development.
- It highlights that the most rational configuration of the massing would follow the local contextual patterns, that of two commercial storeys at ground and first storeys, with residential accommodation above, set back from the building line established at ground and first floor.
- The panel thinks that the applicant's preferred balance of accommodation types and configuration is regrettable; that of a commercial storey at ground floor, with two storeys of commercial set back from the ground level building



line, and three storeys of residential accommodation above that. If this configuration is retained, then further design development work is required to ensure that the ground floor and parapet above are visually strengthened, and that the proportions, rhythms and fenestration of the commercial and residential elevations are well mediated.

Place-making, public realm and landscape design

- The panel would encourage some further consideration of the landscape design of the frontage of the scheme. It would welcome an approach that prioritises and enhances the pedestrian experience along Cross Lane and at the entrance to the building, while avoiding 'clutter' within the streetscape.
- At the rear of the scheme, it will be important to maintain visual connection across the three landscapes of the adjacent developments.

Architectural expression

- As noted above, the proposed balance between commercial and residential accommodation is regrettable and presents great challenges in developing a coherent visual language for the scheme. If the proposals proceed on this basis, it will be extremely important for Cross House to be well-proportioned in visual terms.
- The plinth (the lower storey that steps forward) needs to become a stronger visual element within the elevation. Making the plinth two storeys high would work well, but if the current configuration of a single storey plinth is retained, then the parapet of the plinth should be raised, creating a solid enclosure rather than a railing. The incorporation of texture and richness within the materiality of the plinth and parapet would bring some exuberance to the architectural expression at the level of the street. The panel notes that coloured glazed bricks are proposed at the ground floor of the Pool Motors site adjacent on Cross Lane.
- The approach to architectural expression within the floors above the plinth should be 'calmer' than that of the plinth itself and should have much more visual coherence than currently proposed. The shift from large areas of glazing on the first and second floors to the rhythms of the residential fenestration on the floors above is visually uncomfortable.
- Inclusion of a large area of plate glass windows would be inappropriate to the scheme's location, adjacent to a conservation area. In this regard, the architectural expression should try to build on the language of the conservation area, while avoiding pastiche.
- Further design work is required to ensure a coherent approach to the fenestration of both the residential and commercial accommodation, with



consideration given to the width and modulation of the glazing across all of the upper floors.

- The panel questions whether overheating may be a problem with the west-facing glazing on the top-floor.
- Inclusion of a 600mm deep alcove at the ground floor entrance could remove the necessity for a canopy and could help reduce the level of perceived 'clutter' within the streetscape of Cross Lane.
- The quality of materials and construction, for example the bricks used, will be essential to the success of the completed scheme. The panel would support planning officers in securing this through planning conditions.
- While there may be an argument for the inclusion of red-toned brickwork within this part of Haringey, the panel notes that a high quality rich-textured London stock brick could also work well.

Scheme layout

- The circulation areas are quite constrained, and the panel would like to see greater generosity and flexibility. It questions whether consideration has been given to wheelchair refuges within the hallways. In addition, it notes that service risers within stairs can be very challenging to implement successfully.
- The residential layouts are very compact, and the panel would encourage the design team to 'future-proof' the accommodation where possible, which might include consideration of how working from home might be accommodated.
- The inclusion of a lightwell to enable cross-ventilation within the residential units is supported.
- The panel would encourage greater generosity in the design of the residential entrance, which could be achieved by reducing the size of the meeting room adjacent.
- It also questions whether the configuration of the basement is workable, especially in terms of access to the parking spaces.

Design for inclusion, sustainability and healthy neighbourhoods

- It is regrettable that there is a lot of parking retained within the development for the commercial unit; a reduction in parking would potentially allow for more generosity within the configuration of the scheme.
- The panel highlights that more detailed work on the scheme's energy strategy is required.



- As there are poor daylight levels at ground and first floor, it may be prudent for officers to seek the inclusion of a planning condition to avoid conversion to residential accommodation at a later date.

Next steps

- The panel is confident that the project team will be able to address the points above, in consultation with Haringey officers. Subject to resolution of these issues, the panel offers support for the proposals, and looks forward to seeing the completion of development within the site allocation.