



# Haringey Design Panel no. 27

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011

## ATTENDANCE

### Panel

Stephen Davy  
Michael Hammerson  
David Kells

### Observers

Cllr. John Bevan.....Design Champion & Cabinet Member for  
Housing, Haringey Council (introduction)  
Richard Truscott (Facilitator) .....Haringey Council  
Mortimer MacSweeney .....Haringey Council

**The following schemes were considered by the Panel:**

### 1) Presentation of proposals for housing at Coppetts Road, N10

Chris Way.....Architectus - architects  
Oliver Dyson.....Taylor Wimpey - project managers  
Bill Beyzade .....Taylor Wimpey

### 2) Presentation of proposed extension to Channing School, The Bank, Highgate, N6

Paul White .....Buckley Gray Yeoman - architects  
Laura O'Hagan.....Buckley Gray Yeoman  
Grace Liu .....Rolfe Judd - planning consultants

## Before - Panel Format & Terms of Reference:

Councillor Bevan opened the meeting with an introduction and to pass on his and the Council's thanks for the ongoing work and commitment of the panel; which he wanted to reiterate was highly valued. Haringey Council want to raise the standards of design of all new buildings, and particularly of housing, Cllr. Bevan's area of Cabinet responsibility. The Design Panel is a key tool to achieve this.

Cllr. Bevan also looked forward to the panel assisting in the next Haringey Design Awards. Richard Truscott then added that the awards were now being planned, to be later this year 3 years after the last and 6 after the previous first ever awards and that he hoped to use the panel once again as judges for the awards.

## 1) Presentation of proposals for housing at Coppetts Road, N10 and questions

Chris Way of Architectus, architects of the proposals, presented the scheme, with contributions from Taylor Wimpey, developers. The proposal was for 39 flats in place of previously permitted but unimplemented offices, to complete the Gilson Place development currently containing 128 homes in flats and townhouses, permitted in 2005. Their proposal would imitate the existing, built part of the estate to the extent of mirroring the façade across the road into the estate, as well as materials and details; with 40% affordable housing and 1:1 parking.

They explained that the proposal follows the block pattern of development from the neighbouring part of the existing estate to the north, but would seek to avoid the appearance of domination of parked cars and hard landscaping in the existing court with more intensive landscaping including pergolas. The block would also be spaced further away from the road into the site so it could have more landscaping and have a “boulevard” appearance.

Questioned about sustainability, they said it would achieve no more than Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3, the statutory minimum. However, most questions concerned why this proposal chose to follow in block pattern and architectural style the existing estate, rather than either classical (with authentic proportions and details) or contemporary architecture.

### Panel Observations

#### Concept & Site Layout

1. In view of the applicants chosen starting point being to complete the uncompleted 2006 housing estate, the panel unanimously expressed their concern at this and their view of the existing estate as an unsuccessful scheme as urban design and architecture.
2. In particular, the panel were unanimous in their disappointment that the applicants had chosen to replicate one of the least successful elements of the existing estate, the courtyard layout of the central block with car parking dominating that courtyard (see also point 6 below).
3. The panel's strong recommendation was that a terraced layout of housing addressing streets should be considered for a large part of the site. Street parking would then be the preferred solution to accommodating cars. It could then more easily and successfully integrate streetscape, planting and parking. It is suggested the applicants test different templates of alternative layouts; in this way come up with solutions as to how to transform the scheme.

#### Approach, Routes & Spaces in the development

4. The panel felt the desired “Boulevard” effect was not realised in the proposal; despite setting the proposed blocks further back from the roadway, the streetscape would still be too cluttered, the existing blocks would still be too close to the road and both existing and proposed blocks of flats would not address the road in the manner of a true boulevard; this is partly a problem with animation and the hierarchy of rooms facing the street and partly proportions and detailing (as dealt with below).

5. The panel were very sceptical that landscaping would be sufficient, acceptable or viable in the long term to relieve the large areas of car parking and generally hard surfaces in the courtyard of the proposal. They urged the applicants to integrate streetscape, planting and parking in an alternative street layout; rather than a courtyard, optimising planting and screening, avoiding hidden spaces, a danger to safety and reducing legibility.
6. It was also suggested that the opportunity to enhance the pleasant semi-rustic lane to the south east of the site should be taken to enhance the rustic atmosphere, by suitable landscaping and planting at that end of the lane.

### **Massing, Form & Materials**

7. The massing and heights of the proposed development were considered acceptable; the panel commended the heights along the Coppetts Road frontage, stepping up from the height of the neighbouring houses to matching the height of the neighbouring block of the existing estate.
8. However, there was real concern that the elevations would be dreary; perpetuating the failures of the existing estate. Panel members agreed that the proposal was not “proper” Classical architecture but “spec.” housing with some “classical” features used in elevations. It thus fell between two stools of successful integrated design concept, style and detailing. A fully contemporary solution could be acceptable; modern construction, standard floor heights etc. expressed with modern materials and detailing, which could include brick and other materials that could fit in successfully with the existing estate. Or a more thorough classical design, with classical proportions, *Piano Nobile*, traditionally detailed windows, surrounds etc. could equally succeed.
9. Panel members were also concerned at the convoluted flat layouts proposed, characterised by 45° angles & awkward shaped rooms. They acknowledged that the designs were at an early stage and internal layouts were not expected to be finalised yet, but in addition to noting that the final designs should provide a good standard of living accommodation, convoluted plans would also be inefficient.

### **Sustainability**

10. The commitment to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 was considered a poor aspiration; if the affordable element was to be Homes and Communities Agency funded, then they will require the entire development achieves at least Code 4; Haringey Council also require this for major developments, under the Sustainable Design & Construction draft SPD, which although it had not been adopted, had been through the consultation process and had been endorsed by Cabinet as guidance. Code 3 is therefore less than the statutory minimum.

### **Consensus and Conclusions**

11. The panel felt this proposal had problems. The quantum of accommodation was acceptable, as was the overall height and general massing; but the design was not. In particular, the layout and form of a courtyard dominated by parking was far less preferable to streets and terraces, the architectural language was an unsatisfactory compromise between classical and modern, and streets, parking, landscaping and sustainability were all unsatisfactory.

## **2) Presentation of proposed extension to Channing School, The Bank, Highgate, N6 and questions**

Confidential until planning application submitted.