

Design Review Panel Notes

Wednesday 17th August 2016

Panel	LBHF	Architects and Agents
Robin Partington - Chair Andrew Barnett Kate Digney Maya Donelan Jonathan Manser Alexandra Rook Charles Wagner	Paul Goodacre Davina Barton Barry Valentine Kerstin Kane	Peter Smith Thaddaeus Jackson-Browne Max Radford Architect: Raymond Smith Partners Architects Agent: Lambert Smith Hampton Developer: Metropolitan Police Service Heritage: Turley

SCHEME:

Hammersmith Police Station, 214 to 226 Shepherds Bush Road,

1. Main issues raised during Design Review Panel

1.	Use of terracota tiles
2.	Material of nearby buildings
3.	The building could be more open and engaging
4.	Concerns about privacy
5.	Stepped massing and differing roof levels
6.	Size, positioning and screening of the proposed plant
7.	Levels of basement and parking
8.	Landmark status and function of the building
9.	Lighting options for cells and horse stable
10.	Options for streetscaping
11.	Options for public art to be displayed outside
12.	Internal staircase retention
13.	Recreational areas for police and access to roof space
14.	Height of proposal
15.	Width of the listed building

2. Panel Summary and Recommendation:

The panel thanked the applicants team for their presentation which generated a healthy debate amongst panel members.

The panel began their consideration by looking at the listed police station and the context. The listed police station is opposite the main library and close to the new and former fire stations. It is part of a group of civic buildings. The current police station has a large scale domestic quality with a simplicity and clarity of form.

It has a simple palette of materials and distinct form in the streetscape which is very clear, legible and everybody understands it. Its only disappointing feature is the ramped access which should be re-examined as part of the current proposals to achieve a better configuration. The RIBA and entrance to the Treasury building in London are suggested as good examples of successful solutions.

The new scheme is not a happy solution in many respects. The use of a wide range of materials and a complex form with many steps in the alignment of the building has not achieved a building of quality, and instead looks rather bland and in many places crude, failing to respond to the listed police station or create an appropriate civic presence in the streetscape.

Using the adjacent student accommodation as a precedent for a civic building is wholly inappropriate.

The complexity of form and materials creates an awkward relationship with the listed building, whilst also failing to give a sense of integrity to themes elements. The proposed scheme would benefit from being calmed down with a simplified massing and clearer articulation between the listed building and themes elements, which could still be linked in deferential way. It would be preferable to have a taller building at the rear of the site if it avoided the stepped massing which co-joins the different buildings into one incoherent mass.

The scheme is attempting to join a new building onto the listed symmetrical police station. The panel felt that the proposed composition was not working, and found the relationship between the two awkward and inelegant.

It may be preferable to not seek to “join up” but become visually separate as another element contributing to the terrace on this side of Shepherds Bush Road. Reference was made to McMorrans Wood Street Police Station in the City which has a taller building behind the street frontage building and a clarity in both its massing, use of materials and design.

The panel considered the issue of plant on the roof occupying a large part of the top of the building. There appears to be far too much plant which should be better integrated into the design rather than appearing as an out of scale add-on. A more rational solution should be found. An additional basement is suggested as a means of addressing some elements of plant, helping to mitigate additional bulk, as most buildings in London manage to achieve.

The panel felt that fewer materials would help the composition. The choice of terracotta tiles as the main cladding material is questioned. The panel felt that terracotta tiles rarely work well with small punched windows. It was considered that brick would be a more appropriate material, helping to introduce a greater level of

with opportunities to introduce much needed articulation, relief, order and mediation of scale to the elevations and interest to the façade.

The use of carefully crafted brick detailing would help to articulate the facade without the small windows becoming the defining character of the elevation. The panel felt brick would harmonise with the surrounding buildings if used in the right way, and would reflect the predominant material of the more important buildings in the street.

There would be an opportunity to lighten the composition by the careful detailing of the brickwork. One of the panels' main concerns was with the solid heavy defensible appearance of the façade. It was felt that carefully detailed brick could help lighten the composition, creating a more open and engaging building that held its place in the wider community. A civic building that would age gracefully.

The panel considered the importance of the ground floor elevation, where the proposed stables would result in a solid and unrelenting feel to the street frontage. The panel felt that the ground floor could be more sculptural and a more polite response to the streetscape, detailed in brick rather than stone to create a more engaging response.

Even with careful detailing, the building may still feel overly defensive in the streetscape and could offer more as part of the civic function. The purpose of the row of bollards along the frontage was questioned. It is unlikely that they would perform any effective security function as envisaged. The ability to stand off a threat would have little effect on the integrity of the building and this should not drive the design.

The appearance of a row of bollards was questioned. A more imaginative solution to the streetscape should be explored. More carefully considered planting of an appropriate scale could help mediate between the public realm and the scale of the adjacent building including trees that would introduce an intermediate scale between a human being and the building as a whole.

Similarly, the roofscape (the fifth elevation) should also be exploited for potential benefits. In addition to amenity space for staff, it could be used to get 'secure' daylight into the building, and reference is made to the British Library where the elevations are relatively solid and light to the internal spaces is gained through the roof space.

The panel request that the scheme should respect important internal features of the listed building such as the staircase, and retain, conserve, restore the original features.

The design should have at its core the fact that this is a civic building with a sensitive frontage, and it's design should consider how it will look in twenty years' time. The materials and associated detailing will need to ensure that it weathers well. Brick is suggested as the most appropriate material for the context.

It should be a beautiful essay in brick which could work very well in the street context.

