

Shane Baker, Development Control  
Hounslow Planning Department

Ref: BCC 879  
June 27 2020

By email

Dear Shane,

**Planning Application: Site of the Former Scout Hut  
Market Place, Brentford: Ref P/2020/1774.**

I am writing on behalf of the Brentford Community Council to send you our comments on this planning application.

The BCC and many residents in the Butts CA have been concerned for many years that this site has remained empty for so long. It has been used to dump old vehicles, and has been an eyesore. A planning application to build two houses on the site, following the footprint of the previous buildings, was granted permission and that consent was extended with the support of local residents, but unfortunately that scheme was never built out.

So we welcome this new initiative and the care that has been taken in presenting the Design and Access Statement. In making comments on the scheme we have referred to the D&AS. We hope that you will consider these comments as constructive so that an amended design can be granted a consent with local support and your client will then proceed to build out the scheme.

In its present form the application is not acceptable and we request the Local Planning Authority refuse consent. However, we think you will find that the proposals we are making would be easy to achieve and would not affect the viability of the project.

**1. The Butts Conservation Area.**

The CA was designated in 1968, soon after the formation of the Hounslow Borough Council. It had long been recognized by Ashley Barker, the former director of the Historic Buildings Unit at the London County Council and the first London Director of English Heritage as one of the finest squares in London.

The core of the CA is defined by 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> town houses in dark brick with sash windows, framed in red brick and by hand made roof tiles and tall chimneys. Many are statutorily listed, particularly those close to the

application site, and all the other buildings are locally listed. Public money enabled the car park to be removed from the centre of the square which is now finished in Bredon gravel.

The Boatman's Institute, designed by Noel Parr in 1904 has a bright red tiled roof, bands of white render and red brick and complex fenestration. As it is set behind the Common grassland it stands as a single feature contrasting with the rest of the buildings in the Butts. (D&AS para 2.4 and 2.8)

## **2. The approved Design.**

Residents supported the approved design in 2007 and again when consent was extended because it fitted in so carefully with the prevailing character of the Butts. It actually followed the footprint of the buildings now demolished which had been on the site and it retained the scale and character of the Butts, including the extensive use of dark brick, hand made roof tiles and the all important chimneys, which contributed to the domestic character and familiar silhouette.

The D&AS very helpfully illustrates the approved design at paras 3.3, 3.4, 5.4.

## **3. The Gap.**

The approved scheme left a gap of 11 meters between the houses and the side of the boatman's Institute. D&AS para 4.2 shows that the officers did not accept the 2018 pre-application scheme, which substantially reduced the gap. Residents would agree that this view out of the Butts is valued.

A revised scheme was then prepared, widening the gap to 8.5 meters. This placed all the development on the south side of the site under two gables.

## **4. The Accommodation**

This proposal is for 4 flats in place of 2 houses. There are no small flats in the Butts. Normally small flats are suitable for starter homes, rather than for those who intend to stay for many years to bring up a family. Most residents in the Butts have been here for many years. They would prefer houses on this site, but appreciate that there is no planning reason why the site might not be used for small flats.

However, there is concern that a scheme for 4 flats could be an over-development. It is noted that room sizes and amenity areas only just comply with minimum standards. While this again is not a planning objection it is inconsistent with the more spacious character of the Butts,

## **5. The Gables**

The design of the gables facing the Butts has caused some concern. (D&AS para 6.6). While the pitch roofs and the handmade tiles would be welcome the inclusion of a second gable is a particular problem. It has been suggested that if this gable was lower than the main gable and if the flat roof between the gables could be revised a more successful elevation to the Butts could be achieved. It appears that would require some adjustment to the plans in the area of the common stair.

The design of the gable would also be improved if chimney stacks could be included, the pitch could be adjusted and the gable fascia and eaves could be re-designed. It would also be desirable for the gable walls to be all brick, fitting in with the design character of the Butts. (See para 1 above).

## **6. Landscape.**

The ground floor plan (D&AS para 6.1) shows double gates leading to a wide path which narrows half way along. It would appear that this might come to be used as a car parking area. It would give confidence if the gates could be narrowed and parking on site could be prohibited.

The land between the site boundary and the Butts footpath has long been used as another car park, although this is supposed to be a pedestrian area defined by bollards.

It should be conditioned that this area is returned to grass as part of the Common at the cost of the applicant after building work is complete so that the bollards can be installed and a tree can be planted to replace the tree which was damaged and cut down.

It was a condition of the consented scheme that there would be no on-site parking and this should apply to this application.

## **7. Materials.**

It is clear that the applicant has considered how this building should fit into its setting in the Butts. In para 1 above we have shown that the 1904 Boatman's Institute is a unique feature, contrasting with the terraces of brick faced town houses. We propose that the Boatman's Institute should remain a unique feature and that this site should not mimic it but follow the lines of the design guidance for the rest of the Butts.

This would favour all brick facades, using the facing bricks proposed by the applicant (D&AS para 6.8) and omitting natural lime render and metallic cladding. This is a small building occupying a sensitive site, close to valued listed buildings. It is not appropriate for the design to have so many contrasting elements.

While we support the balconies and larger windows facing the river we think this could be achieved more simply in an all brick structure with a simplified roof form all clad in hand made tiles.

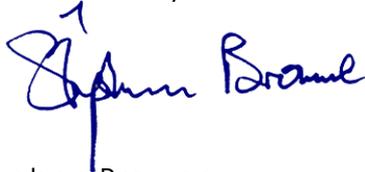
#### **8. Summary and Recommendations.**

**This is an opportunity missed. Local residents have long approached the applicant and the Council to build out the site with a suitable development.**

**While we welcome the applicant's initiative in seeking to develop the site The present scheme is clearly unacceptable and should be refused.**

**It has been demonstrated that the Council and local residents did support the 2007 application and we ask that this scheme is refused consent so that an alternative solution following the lines of the 2007 scheme can be submitted and approved.**

Yours sincerely



Stephen Browne  
Chair, Brentford Community Council

Cc Ward Members: Brentford and Syon Wards