

Mr Alan Wright bptw, architects

BCC 514 dmb

June 28 2010

Dear Alan,

Proposed Development for Goat Wharf Brentford.

Thank you for coming to the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee of the Brentford Community Council to present your scheme.

We look forward to receiving written information on the scheme when it is prepared next week.

On the basis of your presentation we can make some preliminary comments which we hope will assist in further design work. These reflect the views at our meeting which may develop or change as the scheme reaches finality and we appreciate the implications of the design in more detail.

1. Land Uses.
2. Housing mix.
3. Access and parking.
4. High Street Character
5. Lots Ait.
6. Height and Massing
7. Landscape

1. Land Use.

We support the proposal to remove the existing building and use the site for residential development subject to the design being fully compatible with the BAAP proposals generally and for Lots Ait (see 5 below).

We regret that this scheme was not brought forward with the application for the adjacent Albany House. It is clear that a combined scheme would have produced a better solution for both sites with better access to Albany House and a better layout for this site.

2. Housing Mix.

We welcome the provision of flats for sale and for "affordable" units in an integrated scheme and the provision of family accommodation. We anticipate that the design will provide on site play and amenity for children of all ages and for adults including the old and infirm.

The BCC has repeatedly expressed concern that infrastructure is already inadequate for the growing residential population. Sites and funds are

needed for schools, health clubs, clinics, surgeries etc This scheme would add to that pressure. An area should be set aside for community uses before any allocation is made for shops or offices.

We look for a higher proportion of affordable housing, a suitable provision for the disabled and a prohibition on sub-letting without exceptional reason. As the Trust will continue to manage the project we would hope this can all be achieved.

3. Access and Parking.

We were not convinced that the best solution has yet been found to access and service the building.

The radical proposal to re-think a combined access to Albany House and to Goat Wharf may not prove practicable, but we hope it will be further explored.

You should also be aware that the Michael Vorhees Associates traffic report adopted by Hounslow to divert through traffic up Ealing Road may still be operational. This report concluded that Brentford High Street could not contain the additional traffic generated by the town centre and by other frontage developments (of which yours is one) as well as the flow of commuter through traffic .

On the site itself it appears that you are trying to solve too many irreconcilable objectives on the western end. Albany Square is itself a car park and it would be unfortunate if parking and service areas took up this part of your site across the road. Using alternative road surfaces will not remove the vehicles. An uninterrupted view through the site towards the river should be the priority.

We welcome the proposal to include visitor parking (sadly lacking in other schemes), to limit residents parking well below one space per unit and to provide for cycles to TfL standards all underground. We hope that residents will have to walk to their vehicles through public spaces to avoid any suggestion that this could be a gated community.

4. High Street Character.

We welcomed the demolition of the existing building because it rises so abruptly from the back edge of the pavement. Some pavement widening And or setback is desirable along the built frontage plus provision for the bus stop. Additionally the planting of trees and the proposed break in the frontage at the west end would be welcome.

Because of the level changes it will be necessary to lead the public into the site if they are to have views of the river.

It was also suggested that a glass link could be included in the design so that there were view through the building itself.

We are concerned that the High Street frontage you propose might repeat the height, character and scale of nearby buildings including Albany House which together might continue the oppressive feel of the High Street and the air of exclusion (from the river) felt by local residents.

4. Lots Ait.

The BCC fully supports the BAAP proposals for Lots Ait. The site was used as a boat yard involving noisy ship repair and ship building at all working hours. For this reason we proposed that balconies in the adjacent Albany House scheme should not face the river, that triple glazing be used for any windows facing the river and that all residents undertake to protect the working operation of the boatyard when it is restored to use.

We would expect the same to apply to this scheme.

As the BCC opposes the footbridge to Lots Ait we would hope that the boat yard is serviced by water and/or by bringing materials across the natural ford that occurs at low tide. The natural ebb and flow of tides is a significant feature which should be preserved as an essential feature of the boatyard.. If this is not agreed then this scheme will have to take note of the possibility of increased activity on Lots Ait.

5. Height and Massing.

The BCC supports your proposal to align most of the building at right angles to the river and to respect the height limits of Ferry Quays. We propose that the building is reduced in height so that no part of it is higher (in OD terms) than Ferry Quays.

The building will be in full view of Kew Gardens who have proposals to open up their river frontage when funds allow. The impact of this scheme on cross river views should be reduced.

Evidence was given at the Albany House inquiry that Goat Wharf and Albany House should be considered with the Watermasn Arts Centre frontage as a potential unacceptable wall of development.

In the event that the Arts Centre was re-located in the town centre the redevelopment of that site could be affected by precedents set on Goat Wharf and Albany House.

6. Landscape.

Owing to the density of the scheme, the orientation of the site and the demands for recreation and play for adults and children of all ages the demands on the landscape will be hard to meet. There is need for passive recreation and for noisy and safe play and it would also be desirable to have private gardens for larger families living at ground level.

The BCC would like to thank Notting Hill for sharing the early stages of their design with us. Overall we welcome the redevelopment and urge close working with Barratts and we look for a reduction in the height and mass of the building and a resolution of access and landscaping problems and we look forward to being consulted again as the design progresses.

Yours sincerely

Denis Browne
Chairman, Planning Consultative Committee

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BCC web.

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