

Shane Baker by email.

March 25 2017
BCC 787

Dear Shane,

**Planning Application: Morrison's Site, Brentford High Street.
Addendum March 2017.**

Essential Living made a further presentation to The BCC on Monday March 13 2017.

The members have asked me to write to you to give you our views on the application as amended by the applicants Addendum proposals.

We were grateful to have your confirmation that the views expressed in our letter to you (ref **BCC 779, attached**) of February 14th still stand.

CONCLUSIONS ON Essential Living REVISED SCHEME.

14.01. The BCC have noted the adjustments proposed by the applicant which we consider to be a token improvement on the original application.

These changes do not meet the requests made to the applicant in February 2017. The BCC asks you to recommend the refusal of the revised application so that further amendments can be brought forward which would:

14.02, Reduce the height (of the original design by two floors) and the density as previously requested. To fully conform to the Development Plan Standards and to respect the character and scale of residential Brentford.

14.03. Effectively reduce the harm to the St Paul's Conservation Area and St Paul's school.

14.04. Ensure that any redevelopment does not harm important archaeological remains.

14.05. Improve the on-site Amenity provision to meet the SPG standards.

14.06. Reduce the number of single aspect units, particularly those facing north and east..

14.07. Include adequate parking for commercial units and residents.

14.08. Ensure that residents are not left without a major convenience store and car park in central Brentford.

In this section of our letter we have indicated where our views, expressed in BCC 779, attached, have altered in response to the addendum proposals.

(Paragraph reference are to those in BCC 779)

Para 1. No change.

Para 2. We welcome the increase in the width of the passageway between the Beehive and block B at ground level. The upper floors do not appear to have been moved east so that Block B still over-powers the Beehive. The additional floor added to block B has made this aspect of the design worse.

You will already have received a request that your report to the Planning Committee should include a computer-generated image of the Beehive in front of block B. This request is now more important than ever, as it would show how the proposed building would dominate the view from the pavement on the north side of the High Street.

Para 3. No change

Para 4. We welcome the reduction in the number of flats from 225 to 221, but we do not consider that the amended scheme is acceptable

The BCC was concerned that the proposed mixed development was over density and this is still the case.

The amended application has 456 habitable rooms on a "reduced" area (see para 4.07 in BCC779) giving a density of 877 hr/ha.

We repeat that the 2016 Housing SPG 1.3..9 states "Unless additional significant reasons to justify exceeding the top of the appropriate range can be demonstrated proposals should normally be resisted".

We also note that the site is described in Vol 2 of the 2015 Local Plan as being suitable for 75% retail floor space and 25% residential. On this basis the floor area for residential would be limited to 1/3 of 4270m² = 1423m² = 24 flats.

We understand that the applicant contends that if his proposal were to be reduced further to meet these standards it would not be possible to maintain his offer of affordable housing.

We are aware of the recent letter from the Mayor to Hounslow relating to the Gillette South application in Osterley. It is quite clear that the Mayor would expect schemes to comply with the London Plan AND to provide an acceptable proportion of affordable housing.

Para. 5. No change.

Para. 6. No change. Please also note comments below on Paras 2 and 3 of the Addendum D&AS.

Para. 7. No longer relevant, due to the delays in the application programme for the adjacent site.

Para. 8. We note that the changes have involved a reduction (from 19 to 11) in the number of desirable family units, particularly those which provide separate rooms for a family with a boy and a girl. In view of the perceived shortage of family accommodation this is a retrograde step.

Para 9. No change.

Para 10. We note that there are now more balconies. But as they are still being placed to orchestrate the elevations, many flats still do not have a private open space.

Para 10. No change.

Para 11. No change.

Para 12. At the recent presentation to the BCC the applicants informed us that any temporary supermarket and car park facility would have to be provided by the firm who had signed a contract with them to run the new permanent supermarket.

They said that no such contract was yet in place. It is possible that the planning committee might be asked to grant consent for this scheme

without a specific commitment to provide an acceptable supermarket and car park for the whole of the period from the time the present Morrison supermarket closes until the new premises are ready to trade.

In that event the applicant has offered to provide a Shuttle Bus 3 times a day to take customers from the Morrison site to and from another supermarket outside Brentford.

In our view this is totally unacceptable. Several thousand people shop in Morrison's each week, many of whom do not have their own car and would be deprived of their only local major convenience store for 3 years.

We ask the committee not to approve this application without a condition that no demolition will start until an acceptable alternative supermarket and car park is open for business in Brentford.

Para. 13. No change, but we note that the computer-generated images asked for are now even more important as they would show both the partial improvements, seen from the north and the effect of increasing the height of block B on Brentford High Street.

In his latest presentation, the applicant has explained carefully that they have made changes to the design in response to the views expressed by the BCC and others, after consultation with Hounslow officers as set out in their Addendum Design and Access Statement para 1.2:

Single Aspect. Internal designs improved. No reduction in number or orientation of single aspect units. **Still unacceptable.**

Privacy Separation. Privacy "stagger" **still unacceptable.** Height of block B increased so more flats are adversely affected.

Back Lane Street Frontage. Effective **screening should have been provided** to separate service vehicles from St Paul's school.

Bee Hive. Minor improvements to the passage welcomed. Block B is now higher. View of block B towering above Beehive as seen from the north side of the High Street is **entirely unacceptable.**

Accessibility This was not a BCC comment.

Additional Balconies. Balconies are **an essential amenity** for urban flats and not just a decorative element to the elevations.

Cycles. This was not a BCC comment.

The applicant has also proposed additional changes listed in para 1.2 :

High Street Frontages. Proposed changes, see paras 4 and 5.
The proposed changes are acceptable, but they would be further improved if the glass line of the shops was **well set back** from the structure so that the shops and **their illuminated signs** were contained within the design. This would also help to protect residents living above.

The design of the **frontage to the car park** in the central part of building A is not clear.

The Elevations. In our view the elevation design remains rather **heavy handed**. When considered with the approved designs for the South side of the High Street the effect is likely to **be inhuman** in scale, **bland** in detail and **over-monumental**.

When considered in relation to the St Paul's CA the cliff like appearance will **not “enhance” the domestic character** of the Victorian terraces.

The BCC appreciates that the applicant has responded to some of the comments made on their original scheme. We regret that other comments made to them during the pre-application stage were not followed through.

The BCC has considered **the amended scheme on its own merits and we ask that you recommend that it be refused** so that an acceptable scheme can be brought forward and could proceed, if approved, with a condition that no demolition shall take place until an acceptable alternative convenience store and car park is provided in central Brentford.

Sincerely

Denis Browne
Chairman, Planning Consultative Committee
Brentford Community Council

Cc: Applicant, Ward members and members of the Planning Committee