

D R A F T

FAO Marilyn Smith  
Planning Department,  
Civic Centre, Lampton Road  
Hounslow TW3 4DN.

BCC 4??

10/10/08

Dear Marilyn

**Former Alfa Laval Site, Brentford  
Planning Application Ref: P/2007/1164 (00505/Z/P31)**

Thank you for your letter and CD of the latest changes to the Alfa Laval application.

In order to help you in preparing your report for the November SDC, we are writing to update our comments on this application.

The changes from the submission of March 08 are generally improvements, but are too little to change our opinion that the scheme should be refused permission.

In particular;

Although the side and internal "wings" of the scheme are lower and more open than in the previous application, the north wall is actually taller in places. We accept that for reasons of sound and air pollution the function of a wall on the North side is appropriate. We approve of the way the mass of this north wall has been articulated to read as several separate buildings, with different architectural treatments, frontage lines and heights. However the height of such a wall necessary to perform its function as a barrier would be only about six or seven stories. Unfortunately the average height of the proposal, at about nine stories, is uncomfortably out of scale with other neighbouring buildings.

The greatest height is exactly that of the existing tower. While it may be acceptable to have the top of a "tower" at such a height, it is essential that it reads as such. This means that its width must be much less than its height and that its architectural treatment is as a vertical building, not as a horizontal one. We strongly recommend that the perceived general height of the north 'wall' be reduced to only six or seven stories, even if it contains one slender tower element that is taller than this.

The height and unbroken aspect of the north face of the building, combined with the sound reflection of it's face and the over shadow of the elevated motorway would make the A4 road edge particularly unpleasant. It is a mistake to suggest that as these areas are already suffering it is acceptable to make them worse. In

fact, the adjacent stretches of the A4 footpath face the backs of domestic gardens to the west, and the new Wallis House frontage to the east, both of which are much more pleasant than the frontage offered by this scheme.

The form of the remainder of the main body of the scheme is unfortunate in its unbroken nature. Other buildings in the area, although as large as the wings of this scheme, are separated from each other, allowing gaps between them to relieve the internal spaces of the sites. The three courtyards of this scheme would in contrast be oppressive places.

The scheme still offers too little to the public domain on the north and side frontages. The building lines of the east and west elevations still align with that of the adjacent terraced housing. The application makes much of preserving the line of these streets. That would indeed be appropriate if the building was of terraced two-storied housing. However such large building masses as these should be set back from the street, as they are elsewhere in the vicinity. The proposed alignment of monolithic six to eight storied buildings hard on the back of the public pavement is inappropriate for anywhere this side of Hammersmith.

The plot ratio, although reduced, is still ##, which makes it significantly denser than anything which has ever received planning permission in Brentford. Located out of the town centre and with a PTAL of between 2 and 3 this cannot be justified. Unfortunately the symptom of this high density is overlooking, substandard daylight and poor internal planning of the flats. The low ratio of external wall length to internal floor area has resulted in many flats with internal kitchens, hallways and bathrooms. Those flats in internal corners have poor daylight, and are overlooked to an unacceptable degree by the windows and balconies of neighbouring flats. An example is Flat 118, whose living room window and balcony are overlooked by the balconies of flats 117 and 118 at only 5 - 6 m distance.

We note that the applicant's Design Statement refers to our earlier comments on the scheme in Section 12.5. While it is true that we agreed that "the plans were progressing in the right direction", we did not and do not, consider them to be anywhere near acceptable. We therefore recommend that this application be refused.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Rockel  
Planning Subcommittee  
Brentford Community Council