

13 October 2010

Dear Benjamin

I hope our comments are not too late.

Planning application: 2010/1138 – 9 Shepherds Lane

The Hackney Society strongly objects the proposed housing scheme on Shepherds Lane. The proposed development is low quality and has a negative impact on the streetscape.

Elevations

The Hackney Society feel that the elevations are poor quality with inconsistent material design principles applied. The ground floor should have higher floor-to-floor dimensions to give it some scale and presence on the street. The main entrance is small and low and mean in scale and aspiration. The refuse bins next to main entrance is a poor addition to street scene. The left half of the northeast elevation has small, mean windows into Rosina Street. They do not reflect the function of the living space they serve. The render panels on the northeast elevation appear unnecessary and do not follow any logical design principle. The 5th floor looks like a poor rooftop extension rather than an integral part of a quality new-build design. On the Shepherds' Lane facade (southwest elevation), the very minor projection of part of the façade to the right is so small as to seem as a token gesture of articulation which looks cheap and nasty. There appears to be no coherent principle to the application of the render to the southwest façade.

Plans

The bike store is in the basement accessed by steps from the back of the building on Shepherds Lane and at the far side of this building. It can also be accessed by the lift from the ground floor but confirmation is required that a bike can be put in the lift without having to put it on its back wheel. The bike store should be at ground level and near the main entrance. There is no provision for parking: it has been proposed as a car-free development but unless the Council put in place a procedure where anyone applying for a parking permit from this residential address would be refused, the car-free would not be able to be enforced and therefore the impact on the congested streets around the development would be detrimental. If this is not the case, some sort of parking provision within the development should be allowed for.

The *Design and Access Statement* mentions a 'high quality internal environment'. Although the flats have well sized rooms, their halls and corridors are mean and pokey;

this applies also to the communal circulation areas that are again, mean and pokey and do not have any natural daylight or views out. In flats of this size we do not see anywhere for adequate baby buggy storage. The lift at the ground floor should be directly opposite the main entrance door and not offset to the side as it is – it would allow for better spatial supervision. Many of the doors within the flats do not have the necessary 300mm return and therefore would not be useable by a wheelchair user.

Conclusion

The Hackney Society strongly objects to this scheme and believes it should be refused planning permission. As the proposals currently stand, they do not offer sufficient improvement to the borough's housing stock, nor to the physical environment of Hackney. Overall, we think the scheme needs does not give anything back to the public realm through quality design (both the plan form or elevations are poor). It would seem to have been designed around an area schedule with little regard to its surroundings, its section and to the quality of space required for communal areas, usability and the public realm.

Please confirm receipt of these comments.

Best wishes

Lisa Rigg
On behalf of the Planning Sub-group