

9 August 2010

Dear Ian

Planning Application: 2010/1783 – Bridge House, Shepherds Lane, E9 6JL

The design team should be congratulated on the considerate effort that has been put into the planning application, with many items being resolved to a level past that required to achieve planning permission. We would also commend the design of the building for its high sustainable credentials and maintaining the existing trees on the site.

Please find below the Hackney Society's comments on the above mentioned planning application.:

Landscape

The playground to south-west appears squashed into the green space and may be better placed to the north of Bridge House, off the site. A location where the facilities would be more accessible to the wider community. The green space to north of the site is effectively a traffic island and does not encourage public amenity use. We would suggest that by increasing the size of this space and landscaping it, the area would become more pleasant and enjoy a higher usage.

Internal organisation

The refuse store to the west functions a lot better than the refuse store to the east, which is served by a single opening door. The cycle storage behind this is also not ideal with access over a grassed area. These areas would benefit from being re-planned. The proposal does not appear to have a goods lift. Are the proposed lifts of sufficient size to transport furniture to flats? e.g. beds and sofas.

Massing and elevational treatments

The surrounding context has little that could be taken as inspiration for further development. We see the proposed development as having potential to be seen as a standalone structure constructed from differing and more colourful materials than the surroundings. (A rose between the thorns.) We are encouraged to see the use of colour on the building but would suggest that the proposals could go further with a bright but controlled palette of colours.

The overall scale of the structures appears to be considerate of the surrounding buildings, with the green roofs adding to the outlook of people in Bridge House; however the elevational treatments to the front of the building are less successful, with two differing

styles being pushed upon each other. The west core and east deck access part of the building are proposed in a lighter brick than the duplex housing, which is wedged between the two. We feel that the set back of the building does little to separate the structure and the line of the upper balustrade of the duplex apartments further adds to the mismatch along the building.

We would suggest that the brick balustrade be reduced and a steel balustrade be used instead to produce a consistent line between the deck access block and the duplex block. We would also suggest a consistent colour brick be used along the entirety of the building. It is not clear from the proposals if a matching brick to Bridge House is proposed. We would recommend that a contrasting brick is used.

We feel that the rear elevations of the building are more successful due to the use of a singular type of brick.

As with all schemes the details are what will really make or break the building. The deck access part of the scheme has an "Allies and Morrison" type grid facade. For this approach to be successful it needs careful detailing and consideration should be given to using hydraulic lime mortar to avoid expansion joints in the brickwork, or alternatively, the sensitively positioning of the joints.

As mentioned above, we feel that a lot of effort has been put in by the design team and with a minimum amount of changes, the scheme could be very successful.

Regards

Andrew Tetlow
On behalf of the Planning Sub-group