

Proposed redevelopment at 108-116 Glenthorne Road

Planning ref 2021/03464/FUL

Comments from The Hammersmith Society & Brackenbury Residents Association

The Hammersmith Society and the Brackenbury Residents Association have together reviewed the proposals for the redevelopment of the former fireplace shop at 108-116 Glenthorne Road, ref 2021-03463-FUL.

Context

Urban context: Glenthorne Road would once have been a fine residential street. Today the heavy traffic, narrow pavements, and an apparent loss of planning will to retain the original qualities of the street, present us with a patchy and largely anonymous streetscape. The north side of the street offers a reasonable level of consistency of built form, if not detail. Within this context 108-116 Glenthorne Road brings a striking presence; a well preserved parade of five shops, each with a simple upper storey linked by a low parapet concealing the roof behind.

Conclusions

A productive dialogue between developer and LBHF has achieved design proposals which preserve the architectural pattern, detail and identity of the original building in providing for a new use that will sustain the life of the building for the future. However, a fundamental design priority has been overlooked and this application should not be permitted without substantial adjustment, with attention to the following aspects:

1. *Adjacency:* The application design fails to resolve the impact of the proposals on the neighbouring end-of-terrace 50 Studland Street. The impact in relation to overshadowing and loss of light is unacceptable.
2. *Architecture:* imaginative design of the bedroom shopfronts is needed to avoid the risk of a bland street presence; there is need for close attention to retain or match the external joinery details.
3. *Change of use:* the level of servicing and transport use is predicated on a particular type of hotel operation, which it is not reasonable to assume. There is need for independent specialist scrutiny of the traffic and transport requirements, and measures for future monitoring of compliance
4. *Site implementation:* the mix of a simple built form enriched by historic detail requires quality building work and design oversight, an arrangement which is unlikely to be achieved by a design-and-build contract.

5. Supporting Observations

We note the following in support of our conclusions:

Adjacency: The impact on the neighbouring end-of terrace house at 50 Studland Street is unacceptable. The proposed building would be an overbearing presence which overshadows the windows and the rear garden of No, 50, with results confirmed in the daylight and sunlight report, advising that 5 windows and 3 habitable rooms would suffer a reduction in visible sky of *over 20%* . The inevitable substantial loss of sunlight in the rear garden does not appear to have been calculated. In built form, where the first floor of the existing building is 4 metres from the boundary to No. 50, the proposed first floor would be 1.6M metres from, and in parts on top of, this boundary.

Where the existing building is 6 metres high at the rear, the proposed building would be over 9 M metres high, set much closer to the boundary. The problems are summarised on application drawing 4000a Section AA.

Architecture: From street views, the visual impact of the proposed additional storey is diminished by the mansard set-back, which allows the parapet line, a notable feature of the existing composition, to be retained - at a slightly higher level to accommodate the internal volume, but now aligning with the adjacent building. On the Studland Street frontage an appealing stage-set style elevation is proposed, including an ingenious diminished link to meet with the smaller scale of the existing terrace houses alongside.

The shopfront proposals are less tangible: views into the reception and café in the first two bays would engage with the street, but some imaginative design is needed to maintain a sense of visual life in the 3 bays of bedroom windows. Careful LBHF oversight is needed to ensure the commitment to retain or match the existing external joinery is fulfilled.

Change of use: The hotel design targets long-stay guests, but the application notes that a short stay option might prevail. We are concerned that this would generate a level of servicing and transport use – change-over laundry, guest arrival and departure etc – which is not fully anticipated in the application details, and risks both excessive disturbance to Studland Street, and issues of safety and congestion associated with vehicles stopping on Glenthorne Road.

Studland Street already suffers from the heavy traffic of Glenthorne Road, and it is important that the development does not allow this disturbance to spread into the residential street. The applicant's forecast of traffic and servicing therefore requires confirmation by independent specialist scrutiny, and the validity of an approval should be conditional on the hotel operation not exceeding the forecast servicing details - and this performance should be assessed by occasional council inspections in the future.