

Redevelopment of the Fireplace Shop at 108-116 Glenthorne Road Planning Application 2022-03664-FUL.

Joint submission from the Hammersmith Society and the Brackenbury Residents Association

The Hammersmith Society and the Brackenbury Residents Association have together reviewed the further proposals for the redevelopment of the former fireplace shop at 108-116 Glenthorne Road: planning ref 2022-03664-FUL. This application is understood to supersede the earlier planning application ref 2021-03463-FUL submitted December 2021, with outcome listed as 'pending' on the LBHF website.

We note our observations below:

Summary

We would be supportive of the application subject to satisfactory resolution of the following issues prior to planning determination:

1 Impact on No. 50 Sutherland Street: the amended profile of the roof reduces the impact and perceived bulk of the proposed building as viewed from the house and garden of No. 50 Studland Street. However the beneficial outcome of this amendment is not evident from the submission documents: the same sunlight and daylight report which accompanied the 2021 application is included, unchanged, in the current application: this report offered a casual and incomplete assessment of the earlier scheme, and now requires updating to reflect the change in roof profile, and to demonstrate clearly the impact of the development on the sunlight currently enjoyed by habitable rooms and rear garden of No. 50.

2 Vehicular servicing: the hotel proposal targets long-stay guests, but acknowledges that a short-stay option may prevail. Short-stay operation would generate a higher level of servicing and transport access, which could introduce unacceptable disturbance to the residential accommodation in Studland Street, and could compromise the safety and utility of pedestrian and vehicle users of Glenthorne Road. The forecast of traffic and servicing included in the application documents must be assessed by independent specialist scrutiny; furthermore any approval should be conditional on the hotel operations not exceeding the traffic activity forecast, and compliance with this requirement should be assessed by future periodic council inspections carried out at the hotel operator's expense.

3 West elevation: in commenting on the December 2021 application, we noted '*... 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.*' This picturesque arrangement has been lost in the current scheme, replaced by an elevation with an uncomfortable massing and awkward window pattern. We suggest the earlier scheme should be reinstated, with a stronger Studland Street presence which brings both an architectural credibility to the commercial block and a happy connection to the brick terraces.

4 Execution: careful LBHF oversight of the project is essential if the commitment to retain or match the existing external joinery is to be fulfilled; this might be assisted by conditions requiring submission of construction progress photographs.

The mix of a simple built form enriched by historic detail requires quality building work and design control, an arrangement which is unlikely to be achieved by a design-and-build contract.

Background observations:

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, and 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.

Design proposals A productive dialogue between developer and LBHF has achieved design proposals which generally preserve the qualities and identity of the original building, whilst providing for a new use to sustain the life of the building for the future. Viability of this scheme depends on resolution of the impact on the neighbouring building at 50 Studland Street as addressed above, and illustrated on application drawing 4000a Section AA (December 2022 issue).

Architecture: From street views, the visual impact of the proposed additional storey is diminished by the mansard set-back, and this also allows the parapet line, a defining 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.

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; the retention of the inset entrance at each shop brings visual articulation, but introduces a significant challenge in detail and privacy.

Conclusion

Irrespective of the merits of the development proposals, without satisfactory resolution of the issues set out in our opening paragraphs, this application should not be allowed consent.