

17 August 2010

Dear Evie

Application 2010/1830: Land adjacent to 81, 83 85 MOUNT PLEASANT LANE London E5 9EW

The Hackney Society would like to make the following comments about the proposed scheme by FAP-Architects:

Other applications

We are aware that application 2010/1349 has been registered for additional dwellings to the north of the subject site, which will form part of the development. In total 14 units are therefore proposed. The separation of the submission into two applications avoids an affordable dwellings obligation.

Two previous submissions, seeming identical to the current application (2007/3182 and 2010/0045) have been withdrawn prior to determination. Housing has been developed recently on a similar site immediately to the north.

Residential development

The brownfield site between the rear gardens to no.s 81-89 Mount Pleasant Lane E5 and the railway appears to be well suited to residential development in so far as sufficient light and privacy is available within the new dwellings, and not significantly affected in relation to the existing adjacent dwellings. The flats are reasonably spacious, although the plans in some cases are somewhat contorted, seemingly forced into a preconceived staggered arrangement in both plan and section. Approximately 45 new residents could be accommodated with the two developments - considerations of parking and noise disturbance in relation to existing neighbouring occupants should be considered. The gate at the entrance should be fitted with a silent self closing device and perhaps the bins used only between 8am and 11am.

Design

In terms of design it is important to assess the two applications together, although we appreciate that permission is being sort for each to stand alone. Given the complex 3-d nature of the scheme a cgi or model might have been submitted to enable proper consideration. The material and contextual content of the submission is lacking - without context (neither drawn nor photographed) any assessment of detail design/ and finishes is uninformed. It should be considered whether this absence can be dealt with by way of conditions or whether the overall formal proposition is too dependant on material nature to be adequately considered at this stage. The imaginative design will be costly to realise and could therefore easily lose quality in terms of detail - control of detail through planning conditions will be absolutely critical to maintain quality. The environment that is proposed is spatially very complex, and so there will be numerous opportunities for under-considered construction junctions. If the development fails to wear/ weather well

there is a greater risk that it could fall into disrepair and neglect and result in a undesirable environment. We feel that the proposed development has the potential for success if carefully designed and suitably funded.

There is no mention of the current train service timetable - should the regularity and type of trains not be a consideration when so close to the development site?

Planting/ conservation

An absence of tree survey is noted and may be considered necessary given the likely presence of numerous trees on the site. Certainly the retained trees require description, as well as detail of means of protection during the works. Furthermore there are no site photos submitted which might reveal the presence of trees, hedges etc.

On the application form it is stated that the site is visible from public land; we are concerned that a site visit should be made to verify the absence of trees or other natural features worthy of conservation. A large swath of uncultivated ground is to be developed: consideration of accommodation of plant and animal species that currently inhabit the area should be given. It is suggested that the roofs are laid with an extensive green substrate with a minimum 150mm depth and that a variety of species are planted to encourage biodiversity. There may also be consideration given to the planting of the gardens and common areas with hardy species that do not rely on regular maintenance. Bird boxes should be considered to maintain suitable habitats.

Refuse

The description of refuse storage with the design and access statement contradicts the drawn information.

Sustainability

Consideration of sustainability in construction and use, to include renewable energy provision should be included in the submission. There is mention in the design and access statement of hard surfaces being paved 'with permeable material suitable for surface water collection as part of rainwater harvesting' - a statement which requires elaboration as it appears misunderstood (unless a system of land drains to collect rainwater is proposed - unlikely).

Accessibility

The way in which the flats satisfy Lifetime Homes criteria requires elaboration. Flats which are not accessed directly from the ground level should also satisfy accessibility criteria as far as reasonable eg. wcs.

Secured by design

Given the concealed entrance and backland location of the development measures should be included outlining how the development provides a safe place to live.

Conclusion

Despite a number of withdrawn submissions the application still seems lacking in information/ consideration in a number of important areas raised above. We support the proposals in principal and layout, and recognise the potential quality of the development, but feel that there is too little information provided and too many confused statements within the submission, to give us adequate confidence to recommend approval at this stage.

Best wishes

Lisa Shell
Committee member
On behalf of the Planning Sub-group