

SOUTHWARK DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

11 MAY 2020

(Confidential in advance of a Planning Application)

Chair: Nick Hayhurst

Vice Chair: Richard Cottrell

Panel Members: Simon Bayliss; Jack Carter; Andrew Dawes; Wayne Glaze; Adrian Wikeley

MAPOTHER HOUSE SITE – MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL

Architects: ESA

Clients: South London and Maudsley Trust / F3

Planning Consultants: GL Hearn

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this important scheme and thanked the Applicants for their detailed presentation. The presentation had been circulated to them in advance and included a contextual analysis including its link to the Masterplan for the campus, and analysis of the existing building on the site, landscape design, layout plans and elevations as well as 3D visualisations from the immediate area.

The Panel investigate further:

- The existing trees on De Crespigny Park
- □ Proposed courtyard spaces and their uses including the rooftop spaces
- The detailed design of the north/south route
- The 8-storey block and its visibility from the surrounding area
- The De Crespigny Park frontage
- The existing building on the site and its history
- Public and private spaces and access across the site
- The design of homes described as dual aspect
- Location of cores, cycle storage and servicing arrangements
- The permeability in the local area
- How the residential block relates to the CYPB
- Disable parking provision
- Stewardship and ownership of the site
- The implications of the Secure by Design guidance on the scheme
- The location of the Nursery

The Panel welcomed this joined-up approach which meant that they reviewed two schemes on the Maudsley Campus as part of a Masterplan for the site. In this respect they noted that the two design teams were observing each other's reviews and they wanted their overarching comments about the Masterplan to be consistent for both projects.

The Masterplan

The Panel were encouraged by the principle of a Masterplan for the campus and endorsed some of the emerging ideas such as the 'Green Spine'. Overall however, they felt the Masterplan was under-developed and required significant work if it is to

give the campus greater coherence, legibility and permeability, as well as a clear approach to massing, the character of new buildings in the campus and their impact on the conservation area.

The Maudsley Hospital is a very important and much cherished institution in the area and its campus is a recognised feature of the townscape and a large portion of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. The Panel were concerned about the principles of a Masterplan where parts of the site are separated from the rest of the campus affecting how they interact with it and the surrounding area. The permeability of the site is an important and unifying feature of the campus and is inherent in giving people, residents, staff and patients, the ability to move across the site unhindered. In this regard the Panel endorsed the general principle of the east-west 'Green Spine' and the north-south route as the main structuring devices for the Masterplan. It is vital that these two routes are designed with in unified manner.

Campus buildings, including residential buildings are part of the public's experience of the place and the landscape and, together with its permeability, are its strongest unifying device. The Panel highlighted that the client team will need to clearly define the clinical, the 'secure' and the publicly accessible parts of the Campus, together with the new residential components in the Masterplan. The desired permeability, the hierarchy of public to private, and accessibility should be clearly defined including the desire lines and destinations for those who will use the north/south route and the east/west 'Green Spine'. The creation of a Masterplan is therefore an opportunity to define this sequence of public and institutional spaces and how these will knit back to this part of the city: an opportunity that has yet to be fully taken.

A further significant concern about the Masterplan related to the massing and height across the site. The Panel wanted to ensure that the CYPB building for example, would not set the precedent for the Masterplan and result in similarly tall buildings arranged all along the 'Green Spine' and the north-south route. As described, the Panel were concerned that, if realised, this could present a 'wall' of buildings extending across the site from the CYPB which would not be appropriate in the conservation area. They asked that the Masterplan as a whole should be tested rigorously and in 3D using a series of physical and soft models. This testing should include the consideration of views from the surrounding streets and within the Campus itself. For example, the views from Denmark Hill looking north and east across the site and views looking north and west from the junction of Grove Lane and Champion Park will help define the nature and character of the Masterplan and the way the proposed massing will be appreciated and experienced relative to the surrounding area. Similarly, views from Champion Hill, as well as along the length of Grove Lane, and De Crespigny Park should also be considered.

In conclusion, the Panel did not feel that the Masterplan presented a fully considered and appropriate vision for the evolving character of the hospital and the campus and neither did it address the role it plays as part of the city nor in relation to the school and nearby listed buildings.

Loss of Mapother House

The Panel highlighted the significance of the existing Mapother House both as a distinguished building in the conservation area and as a ground-breaking clinical

building of its time. They felt its loss, both as a Campus building of importance to the hospital and the conservation area would require additional justification. In addition to a condition survey, a detailed analysis of the way this building had been considered or re-use as a residential block and the type of accommodate it could offer including its façade retention and/or roof-top extension would need to be presented in any planning application.

The Mapother House development and the Masterplan

The Panel consider this site as an important part of the Maudsley Hospital campus. In this respect, the residential component should be a permeable part of the campus and not separated off; it includes affordable housing that could be occupied by key workers including those who work at the Maudsley. The Panel were concerned that the most pragmatic implications of the secure by design guidelines have resulted in a gated community within the campus and where the permeability of the site was pushed to the edges.

They challenged the designers to reconsider the arrangement and to seek a closer relationship between the housing and the Maudsley site, making the campus more permeable, not less. In principle, they endorsed the perimeter block approach but felt strongly that the gardens spaces should be accessible from the campus to the south. They suggested this could potentially be achieved with a U-shaped block to the west, a linear block to the east with a re-alignment of the north-south route between them.

The North / South route

The Panel noted that the area is characterised by pedestrian permeability with the best example being the local route connecting De Crespigny Park to Love Walk. They stressed the duty that this site has to deliver this north/south route in the context of the Masterplan especially as it offered quick access for residents to Denmark Hill Station.

The current arrangement locates this north/south link along the eastern edge of the site and opens up the sides of the buildings along Memory Lane as an elevation to the new route. The Panel asked the designers to consider alternative locations for the north-south route including taking it through the development. Perhaps an analysis of the local pedestrian routes and desire lines could help to locate the optimum position for the north/south link alongside consideration of issues such as streetscene and natural surveillance.

The Panel encouraged the design team to look again at the engineered character of the link. The Panel were nervous about the 'engineered' feel of the bridge structure proposed and urged the designer to think of it from the point of view of pedestrian experience and the type of space that was created underneath it. The challenge for the designers is to ensure that this link is accessible, generous, well lit and landscaped and feels safe for those who use it. The Panel suggested retaining it as banked, landscape feature.

Landscape

The Panel were encouraged by the potential for the landscape on this site but felt the detailed proposals could benefit from further development to ensure that the landscape, which is a defining feature of the area, can shine through. At the moment

the proposed pavement and landscape treatment to the front is not particularly generous.

De Crespigny Park is characterised by villas set back from the street with a line of mature trees on the street. The Panel felt the proposal should be more generous at the front and follow local character of De Crespigny Park more closely including the consideration of the placement of mature trees to make a more positive contribution to the street-scene. They highlighted that the design of residential gardens and defensible space at the front is unclear in the current landscape design and should be part of the public face of the development.

They welcomed the involvement of a landscape architect especially in the design of the courtyard gardens however felt that these were not specific to this place. The Panel suggested they consider improving the purpose and quality of these spaces and perhaps consider incorporating the therapeutic qualities of garden spaces in their design. They also asked the design team to consider the roof-top spaces and to provide gardens for residents at the upper levels.

Height, massing and arrangement

The Panel were generally comfortable with the proposed height on De Crespigny Park and the organisational diagram for the site. They were not able to conclude on the appropriateness of the proposed height for the buildings to the rear and requested more information to ensure that the site is optimised. In these cases a model (either physical or virtual) together with a view assessment from various locations in the area including Denmark Hill, Bessemer Road and De Crespigny Park would help the Panel especially in respect of the proposed height to the rear.

The Panel challenged the designers to test the arrangement and scale of blocks in a more rigorous way. They did not support the assertion that a narrow return on a singular linear block offers a 'dual aspect'. A proper dual aspect is a corner unit or a corner home. The Panel were concerned that the current arrangement is dominated by single-aspect units (a number of which are north facing) which would not be acceptable. They encouraged the designers to explore alternative arrangements like a perimeter block with gaps to deliver more proper dual aspect homes across the site.

Architectural expression

The Panel were encouraged by the emerging design of the De Crespigny Park frontage and felt the top floor could benefit from further development and refinement. De Crespigny Park offers a wealth of architecture which the designers should look at and develop in their proposal as a modern interpretation of this historic street.

When they considered the design of this frontage they questioned the design of the narrow gaps and the blank flanks between the blocks. These gaps are severely diminished as spaces, don't benefit from natural surveillance and will not feel safe. They also questioned the deeply recessed north-facing balconies. The top is also set back significantly and lacks composition. They suggested the architects consider bringing the top floor closer to the street frontage and perhaps unlock more value to the development. The perimeter block approach would suggest a more judicious

approach to gaps – perhaps providing a single more generous and safe route instead two narrow gaps.

The Panel questioned the design of the long block along the east edge, currently presented as a series of buildings (with a range of brick colours and compositional devices) and very different from the De Crespigny Park frontage. They felt this artificial division of the facade was confusing and disruptive to the development as a whole. The Panel encouraged the designers to develop a strong, handsome and more consistent approach to the design in the round and a more subtle approach to the choice of brick. They suggested the architects investigate similar perimeter blocks in the area like Ruskin Park House on nearby Champion Hill and that the long eastern block should be either considered as two buildings, with a gap, or as a single perimeter block presenting a more unified frontage extending from De Crespigny Park returning along the flank.

The Panel were encouraged by the designer's efforts to introduce patterned brickwork into the design of the facades. This a strong reference to the existing building which has a fine patterned flank. They challenged the designers to use the pattern properly as an ordering device for the whole façade including for example, the arrangement of windows, balconies and main entrances.

Quality of accommodation

The Panel were not able to look at the internal layouts of the flats but felt the homes appeared squeezed and lacked generosity. Added to the earlier concerns about single-aspect homes they were concerned that this would not provide high quality homes. More information about the internal arrangements, the daylight analysis of the proposed homes as well as the provision of private and communal amenity will help to demonstrate this.

The Nursery

The Panel questioned the location of the Nursery, currently sited at the north/west corner of the site. They highlighted that this could be compromised, with outdoor spaces located close to busy roads and lacking sunlight at the times when it will be used by children. They encouraged the designers to reconsider this location and perhaps consider the north east corner, further away from the busy road and closer the north/south link where the outdoor space could benefit from morning sun.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Panel generally endorsed the principle of delivering a substantial residential development on this site but wanted it to play a more meaningful role in the development of the campus and its community as a whole. There were many aspects of the scheme that they supported and they encouraged the designers to develop the relationship of the scheme to its landscape, to deliver a meaningful and safe route across the campus and high quality housing appropriate in its context