

New School and Commercial Building

Further proposals for a replacement 2FE primary school, new pedestrian route and commercial building on the school site, with the school temporarily relocated to a neighbouring adapted warehouse during construction. The scheme was previously presented to the Panel in January 2013.

The AAP is disappointed that little progress had been made following the earlier presentation and that the outstanding issues remain unresolved. It is supportive of the underlying design concept of tiered classrooms fronting onto playdecks and providing covered outdoor teaching space below, but considers the scheme is compromised by the commercial building and let down by the weak elevational expression.

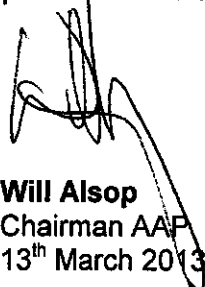
The commercial building is squeezing the new public realm and the opportunity for the architecture to properly deliver the concept and benefit from the clever plan form. The poor outdoor provision for the SEN and the compressed sheltered teaching spaces are cases in point. It is disappointing that awnings may well be needed to provide the sheltered space.

The scheme has been developed as a section and with insufficient consideration to the form of its elevations. The main elevations do little to reveal the internal life of a civic building or celebrate its function as a primary school. If the planning intention is to draw activity and interest from Brompton Cross southwards, the scheme does not deliver. Currently the street elevation is dull and lifeless, and fails to improve the public's experience of the school along Sloane Avenue. Greater thought should be given to 'opening up' the building and displaying its internal form and layout, and to other more subtle moves (e.g., colour, bespoke furnishings, art). They should be joyful and inspiring to young children.

Internally, the Panel questions whether the flexible hall at ground floor is too open to the floors above and may prove disruptive without acoustic treatment, particularly with a staggered day. It also suggests reviewing the classroom windows and improving their aspect.

The scheme architects are asked to look again at the new public realm, which lacks ambition. It does not really line up as a pedestrian link and has a soulless quality that may add up to little more than simply denoting where the commercial element stops. More could be done to inhabit and animate the space and to give it a positive public role. This could be by re-focussing the main school entrance onto this space and encouraging parents/carers to linger.

Lastly, further thought needs to be given to the pick up/drop off arrangements and where parents/carers can wait, particularly during inclement weather.



Will Alsop
Chairman AAP
13th March 2013